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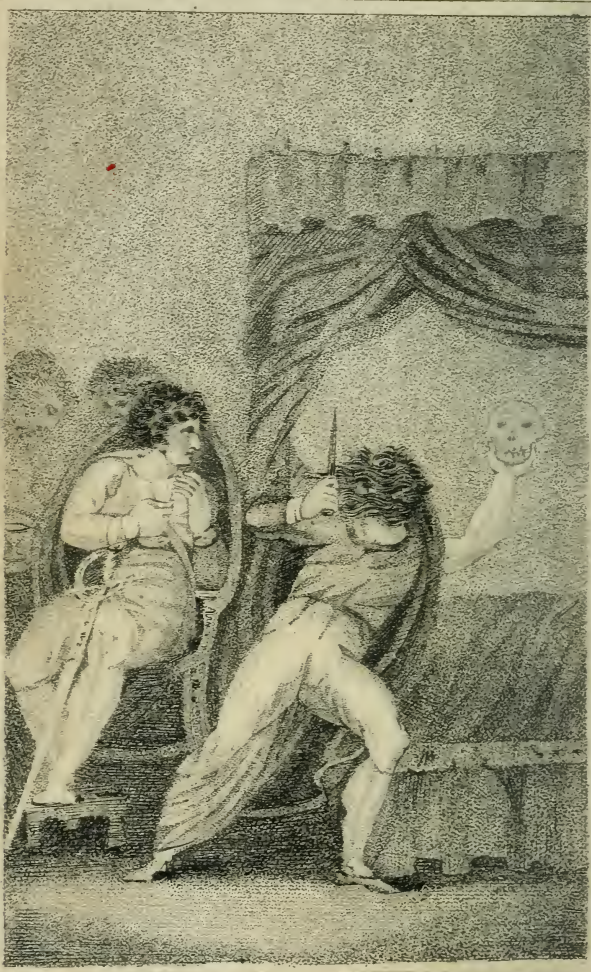

Edwards sculp. Water col.

Alphonso startled at the appearance of a figure, holding a rusty dagger in one hand, & a human skull in the other.

THE

GOTHIC STORY

OF

Courville Caſtle;

OR THE

ILLEGITIMATE SON,

A

Victim of Prejudice and Paſſion:

OWING TO THE

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

INCULCATED WITH UNREMITTING ASSIDUITY

BY AN

IMPLACABLE MOTHER;

WHOSE

RESENTMENT TO HER HUSBAND

EXCITED HER SON TO ENVY,

Uſurpation, and Murder;

BUT

RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

AT LENGTH

RESTORES THE RIGHT HEIR

TO HIS

LAWFUL POSSESSIONS.

To which is added the

ENGLISH EARL:

or the Hiſtory of

ROBERT FITZWALTER.

Though education in a great meaſure ſtamps the man, virtue is within the reach of all; and although the path may be rugged, the reward is ſure.

LONDON:

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THE

GOTHIC STORY

OF

DE COURVILLE CASTLE.

From the Lady's Magazine.

"GRACIOUS Father! what can this mean?" ſaid *Alphonſo* to his ſervant. "I know not," anſwered *Philip*, "unleſs your uncle be dead."—"But it is very extraordinary," replied *Alphonſo*, "that there is no perſon in the caſtle; however, be it as it may, we had better turn our horſes, and look for ſome place to reſt at to-night; we may perhaps gain ſome intelligence of this affair." They accordingly rode through the foreſt, and ſtruck into a path, which they ſuppoſed might lead to ſome habitation; but as no ſuch appeared, and as night was approaching very faſt, they began to deſpair of finding any. At laſt they deſcried a light, glimmering at a diſtance; which ſeemed to proceed from ſome window; they therefore ſpurred their horſes, and made toward it. The light was, however, ſoon extinguiſhed, and they remained in total darkneſs, not knowing which way to take. Fortune, at length, favoured them, and they arrived at a ſmall cottage, the inhabitants of which were retired to reſt. They immediately concluded it was from the windows of this cottage they had ſeen the light; they therefore knocked loudly at the door, which was opened by an old woman, who demanded what they wanted. "Dame," replied *Alphonſo*, "we have loſt our way in this place; not knowing what road to take, we ſhould be obliged to you if you would let us have a night's lodging here, as we mean to depart early in the morning. You may depend on it, I will reward you for your trouble."—"That is no matter," anſwered ſhe; "you are very welcome, if you can put up with our poor hut. But you ſeem tired; alight, and I will make a fire." *Alphonſo* diſmounted, and tying his horſe to a tree, followed her into the cottage. The woman offered to call up her huſband, but *Alphonſo* would not allow her to diſturb him; telling her he did not intend to go to bed, but would ſit by the fire till morning. The woman ſeemed ſurpriſed; but at length conſented to go to bed, after ſetting before them ſome bread and cheeſe, with a jug of ale, which was all ſhe had in the houſe. *Philip*, who was very tired, fell aſleep; and *Alphonſo* ſat ruminating on the adventure of the preceding evening.

It is now neceſſary to acquaint the reader who *Alphonſo* was. He had the misfortune to loſe his parents while he was quite an infant, and was afterward brought up by his uncle, the count *de Courville*, who was a man of an auſtere behaviour, impatient

of controul, and of a tyrannical disposition. *Alphonso* had, however, the good fortune to become a great favourite with his uncle, who thought he saw some of his own spirit in him. He had indeed a manly dignity in his carriage, which was blended with so much gentleness, that every person at first sight was unavoidably prepossessed in his favour. His uncle would often regard him with a steady look; would then knit his brows, and with a deep sigh, turn his face away, and seem lost in thought: then he would start up, and say, "It must not be." He would then take a walk, and return home as composed as ever. One day he called his nephew to him: "*Alphonso*," said he, "you are now of an age when travelling would be of service to you; I would wish you, therefore, to get ready as soon as you possibly can; I have only one piece of advice to give to you:—never let your passions get the better of your reason." *Alphonso* took his hand; he found it tremble violently. He looked up in his face, and saw his countenance change alternately from red to pale. But his uncle assuming a stern frown, said to him: "Retire, I have now no more to say; remember my advice; you may need it." *Alphonso* bowed, and obeyed. He was struck with his uncle's behaviour: he was used to his sudden changes of temper, but thought he was now more than usually solemn. Fear of he knew not what made him shun his uncle as much as possible, till the day came on which he was to set out; he then went to his chamber, took his leave of him, and departed, attended by his faithful servant *Philip*.

Nothing worth remarking happened, till one day, as he was riding through a wood on the confines of *Germany*, several banditti rushed upon them, dragged *Alphonso* off his horse, and robbed him of all he had. They then did the same to *Philip*, and left them almost dead with the bruises they had received in making resistance. Soon after, a carriage happened to pass by, with an elderly gentleman, who, perceiving the situation they were in, ordered his coachman to stop, and give them some assistance. *Philip*, who was a little recovered, related what had happened, and who they were. The gentleman then desired his servant to help *Alphonso* into the coach, and drive home. As soon as he arrived, he ordered a bed to be got ready, and had him put into it; he had so much care taken of him, that in a few days he was able to leave his apartment, and go down to dinner. When he entered the parlour, he was surprised to see a young lady there, and was going to withdraw; but the baron *de Stainville* (which was the gentleman's name) taking the young lady by the hand, led her toward him. "My dear *Alphonso*," said he, "I will now introduce my daughter *Julia* to you."—"This, my dear," turning to her, "is the young gentleman you have heard me say I have such an esteem for."—"You are too good," replied *Alphonso*, "I am sure I can have no claim to such kindness." He then paid his respects to *Julia* in a most graceful manner; the day was passed with mutual satisfaction, and when night came, each was sorry to part. *Alphonso* retired to bed, but not to sleep; dif-

ferent thoughts occupied his mind. His generous diſpoſition could not bear to lie under an obligation; and as he was now able to travel, he thought it would be wrong to ſtay long in a place where he had already received ſo many favours; but ſtill an irreſiſtible impulſe made him wiſh to remain longer: he felt a partiality to that place, which he imputed to gratitude; but he was miſtaken—*Julia* was the magnet that attracted him, though he did not allow himſelf to think ſo. Morning appeared before he cloſed his eyes. *Julia* had not paſſed a better night. The image of the amiable *Alphonſo* was continually before her eyes; ſhe thought him the moſt elegant young man ſhe had ever beheld; ſhe aroſe pale and languid: her father obſerved it, and aſked if ſhe was ill. She bluſhed, and turned it off by ſaying ſhe ſuppoſed it was raking laſt night made her look ſo pale, as ſhe uſed herſelf to go to reſt early. They then talked of the different places *Alphonſo* had viſited, and, among others, of ſeveral curious hermitages he had ſeen and greatly admired, as they were the beautiful productions of nature. "Talking of hermitages," ſaid the baron, "puts me in mind of an extraordinary adventure which I met with ſome time ago. If you pleaſe, I will relate it." They expreſſed their deſire to hear it, and the baron began as follows:

"One morning, happening to riſe rather ſooner than my uſual hour, I took a walk among the neighbouring mountains to paſs my time till breakfaſt. The romantic appearance of the ſcenes around me ſo enchanted my imagination, that I inſenſibly ſtrolled farther than I intended, and was bewildered in the intricacies of the place. While I was deliberating what courſe to purſue, I perceived a figure at a diſtance approaching toward me. I therefore advanced to meet it; but as ſoon as the perſon ſaw me, he turned back, and fled with precipitation. Curioſity now impelled me, and I ran forward with ſpeed, in hopes to overtake him; but turning a corner of a rock, I loſt ſight of him. Fatigued with my purſuit, I ſat down on the ground, and began to conſider which way I ſhould return; when I thought I heard a deep ſigh, as if uttered by ſome perſon near me. I turned round, but could ſee no one. In a few moments it was repeated ſtill louder. Starting up, I caſt my eyes behind the place where I ſat, and ſaw a thick cluſter of buſhes; and looking nearer, I perceived the entrance of a cave, at the further corner of which was a venerable old man, kneeling before a little wooden table, and ſeemingly in fervent prayer. When he ſaw me, he roſe up and invited me to ſit down. I then inquired whether he was the perſon who had fled from me among the mountains. 'I am,' ſaid he; 'and though you may think me an unſociable wretch, I can aſſure you I have my reaſons for wiſhing to avoid the ſight of man, which muſt ever remain a ſecret. My misfortunes are ſuch as preclude all hopes of enjoying happineſs in this world.'—'That is out of your power to ſay,' replied I, 'the viciſſitudes of this life are many; we ought always to live in hopes, without which, life would be miſerable. Indeed, no one ſhould give himſelf to

deſpair.'—'I do not,' anſwered he, 'but having loſt all I ever held dear, I have no wiſh to live otherwiſe than I do at preſent: all I wiſh, is never to ſee mankind again. Heaven knows I have been an innocent ſufferer by the perfidy of one of my own race—a brother too; but I forgive him, and may the Almighty do the ſame.' Grief now overcame him, and he threw himſelf on the ground in an agony not to be deſcribed. I tried all in my power to ſooth him, and at length ſucceeded, and he became more calm. I then begged his pardon for intruding upon his ſolitude, and entreated his aſſiſtance to find my way out of the mountains. He then conducted me through them, and brought me to a path that led me to the plains. 'I muſt now leave you,' ſaid he, 'as I have already paſſed my limits; but leſt you ſhould think me inhoſpitable, you have my permiſſion to viſit me again, if you have any inclination: I may perhaps be tempted to tell you my tale of horror; but I muſt exact your promiſe never to let any one ſee me but yourſelf; my life depends upon concealment. You may not, perhaps, believe me, when I tell you that it is not for my own guilt I fear detection; but that I wiſh to avoid the diſcovery of my enemies.' We then parted, and I gave him a ſolemn promiſe never to bring any one with me. I have ſeen him twice ſince; but never could make him deviate in the leaſt from his firſt determination. He ſeems a man of great learning, and by his converſation, I think he is of a noble, generous diſpoſition. But I tire your patience by ſuch a long ſtory."

Alphonſo and *Julia* aſſured him, that they were highly pleaſed with it; and only wiſhed to ſee ſuch an extraordinary man; but as it was impoſſible, they muſt content themſelves with hearing of him; though from the baron's deſcription of him, they ſhould be very much intereſted in his welfare. Another week paſſed away, and *Alphonſo* had yet fixed no time for his departure. Though he knew he had no longer excuſe for ſtaying; yet he could not bear the thoughts of parting from his beloved *Julia*, as he was certain he was not indifferent to her. He therefore thought his beſt way would be to acquaint the baron with his love for *Julia*, and truſt to his generoſity. He accordingly ſent a ſervant to the baron's apartment, to inquire whether he might be admitted to an hour's converſation with him. The baron, who was reading in his room, was ſurpriſed at the meſſage, and wondered what *Alphonſo* had to ſay to him, that he wiſhed to ſpeak privately; he therefore ſent word back, he ſhould be very happy to hear whatever he had to ſay, and begged him to come immediately. When *Alphonſo* came into the room, the baron took him kindly by the hand—"What," ſaid he, "can my young friend have to ſay, that he wiſhes to be ſo private? ſomething very particular, no doubt, elſe he would not have ſent ſuch a formal meſſage. But come, ſit down, and let me know all." *Alphonſo* then told him, he found it impoſſible to depart without making him acquainted with his love for his amiable daughter, whom he adored from the firſt moment he beheld her.' When

he had done ſpeaking, he looked at the baron, wiſhing to read in his countenance an anſwer favourable to his hopes.

After a few moments ſilence, the baron roſe from his ſeat, and taking *Alphonſo* by the hand, ſaid: "This is what I feared, yet it was out of my power to prevent it. *Julia* and you are formed for each other, and I freely give my conſent upon one condition, which is, that you finiſh your tour, and, if you then can obtain your uncle's permiſſion, *Julia* ſhall be yours. I will allow you one week to prepare for your departure, and to take leave of my daughter; remember, however, ſhould your mind ever change, and you ſhould find you love another better than *Julia*, I abſolve you from any promiſe you may have made me. You may now ſeek *Julia*, and acquaint her with what has paſſed." *Alphonſo* bent his knee to the ground, and taking the hand of the baron, thanked him, with a heart overflowing with gratitude. The baron raiſed him up, and embraced him kindly. *Alphonſo* then left him, to go in ſearch of *Julia*, whom he found in the parlour.

After ſome trifling converſation, *Alphonſo* related what had paſſed between him and the baron; apologiſing, however, for not conſulting her firſt; "for," ſaid he, "had the baron refuſed his conſent, I would have fled from this place, without making even my adorable *Julia* acquainted with my unhappy paſſion. Pardon then my preſumption, and cheer me with the hope that you will agree to be mine." *Julia*, to whom diſſimulation was unknown, frankly confeſſed, that of all mankind, ſhe loved but him alone.

Nothing now damped their mutual joy, but the thoughts of their approaching ſeparation. *Alphonſo*, however, pleaſed himſelf with the idea, that, after a ſhort interval of time, they ſhould meet, never more to part. Young and ſanguine, he thought not of the numerous viciſſitudes of life; he thought nothing could prevent his union with his beloved *Julia*, if his uncle would but agree to it, which he made no doubt of his doing, as the baron was deſcended from a noble family, and poſſeſſed of an affluent fortune. The week ſoon paſſed away, and the hour of his departure arrived: *Julia* clung round his neck as ſhe would to an affectionate brother, for, in the diſtreſs of the preſent moment, ſhe gave way to the impulſe of her affection. *Alphonſo*, after embracing her tenderly, tore himſelf away. He then took a reſpectful leave of the baron, mounted his horſe, and departed. Melancholy ideas now, for the firſt time, darted acroſs his mind, and he, more than ever, dreaded the auſtere manners of his uncle. The different cuſtoms and diverſions of the kingdoms he viſited, diſſipated in ſome meaſure the gloom which hung upon his mind; theſe, however, ſoon began to loſe their novelty, and he determined to return home immediately. This reſolution he accordingly put in practice, and, attended by *Philip*, ſet out for *De Courville Caſtle*. But what muſt have been his ſurpriſe, when he arrived there, to find the caſtle entirely deſolated! The owls had taken up their abode in the turrets, and moſs and

ivy covered the walls, and almoſt hid the windows from their ſight. *Alphonſo* thought he might ſtill find ſome perſon in the caſtle: he therefore rode round the moat, till he came to the place where the drawbridge ſtood, but found it drawn up. This increaſed his ſurpriſe, as the bridge could not be drawn up unleſs ſome perſon was within the caſtle. He therefore determined to try whether the moat was ſhallow enough in any place to admit of his croſſing it; and ſoon found a part which was nearly dried up, where he paſſed; and, going to the gate, knocked and called as loud as he could. No anſwer was returned; and he could hear nothing but his own voice echo through the caſtle.

What followed, has already been related. We will now return to where we left *Alphonſo* in the peaſant's hut. When morning dawned, the old woman got up, and called up her huſband, who ſeemed very much ſurpriſed at the ſight of *Alphonſo*. His wife then told him, how they begged for ſhelter from the inclemency of the night. The man was ſatisfied, and they ſat down to a homely breakfaſt. During their repaſt, *Alphonſo* queſtioned them concerning the caſtle. While he was ſpeaking, the man ſurveyed him with a ſcrutinizing look, and when he had ended, replied, that he knew very little about it. The woman was more communicative, and told *Alphonſo*, that ſhe knew the count *De Courville* had left the caſtle becauſe it was haunted, for all the ſervants had told her that the count ſeemed very much troubled in his mind, and that they often heard frightful noiſes. The man bade her hold her tongue, and not repeat ſuch idle ſtories. *Alphonſo* ſurveyed him attentively, and thought he diſcerned ſomething in his manner which indicated his being above the mean condition he appeared in; but he had a reſerve in his behaviour which repelled his curioſity. He then told them who he was, and ſaid, he ſhould wiſh to have ſome part of the caſtle made habitable for him to reſide in till he ſhould gain ſome intelligence of his uncle. The man readily agreed to aſſiſt him, and they ſet out to examine the caſtle. They tried in vain to open the gate; it was ſo ſtrongly ſecured, that it bade defiance to their utmoſt ſtrength, and they began to deſpair of being able to enter it, when *Alphonſo* recollected a ſmall wicket which opened into the foreſt, where his uncle uſed often to walk in an evening. They went round to it, and with ſome difficulty opened it: they then paſſed through the ſpacious court-yard, which was almoſt overgrown with graſs; and then forced the gate, which opened into the ſouth ſide of the caſtle. But the cold and damp was ſo exceſſive, that *Alphonſo* almoſt gave up his reſolution of reſiding there. He determined, however, to ſearch it throughout, in hopes to find ſome memorandum or letter, to account for his uncle's ſudden departure; nor was he deceived; for, after ſearching through ſeveral rooms, he came to the apartment where the count uſed to ſleep. He looked round, and perceiving a whole-length portrait of his uncle, he involuntarily made a ſtop, fixed his eyes ſteadfaſtly upon it, and thought, for the moment,

he ſtood before him. It had the ſame ſtern frown which had often made *Alphonſo* tremble when a boy; the colours were rather faded, which gave the countenance a more gloomy caſt. He ſtood looking at it for ſome time, when he was rouſed from his reverie by the loud claping-to of a door. His imagination was ſo bewildered that he gave a ſudden ſtart, and ſtruck againſt the picture, the nail of which giving way, it fell with a loud craſh, and broke the frame to pieces. *Alphonſo*, through attention to the picture, had not obſerved that the man, with his ſervant *Philip*, had paſſed on; when miſſing him, they turned back, and let go the door, which they were opening; and that was the cauſe of the noiſe *Alphonſo* had heard. After they had recovered from the ſurpriſe this fooliſh incident had thrown them into, *Alphonſo* was proceeding to take up the picture, when he ſaw a ſmall parcel of paper lying on the ground: he took it up and found it to be a letter directed to himſelf. He broke the ſeal with eagerneſs, and was juſt beginning to read, when his eyes were arreſted by an object which he had not obſerved before; this was a door which had been concealed behind the portrait. *Philip* perſuaded him to ſee what it led to. *Alphonſo* took his advice, and putting the letter in his pocket, opened the door, which was faſtened by three iron bolts. The room it led to was ſmall, and had but one window to it, which was guarded with croſs bars of iron. The furniture was mean: it conſiſted only of an old moth-eaten damaſk bed, a table, a chair, and an empty cheſt. In one corner of it ſtood a book-caſe, but the books were ſo demoliſhed by the rats, that they could not have been uſed for many years. They examined every part of the room, but could find nothing more worthy obſervation; and as day was far advanced, they thought it beſt to return to the cottage, where they might learn from the letter what was beſt to be done. This was agreed to by all, and returning by the ſame way they came, they ſoon reached the cottage. *Alphonſo* then took out the letter, and read as follows:—

"*The Count* DE COURVILLE *to* ALPHONSO:

To you, Alphonſo, *I addreſs theſe lines, uncertain whether they may ever fall into your hands: if they ſhould, they may ſerve to remind you that you have an uncle who, however undeſerving, ſtill loves you with the greateſt affection. This caſtle is yours. No doubt you think my ſudden departure from it very myſterious. I know you have an underſtanding ſuperior to many of your age, and will laugh at the idle tales which are circulated through the country. Far different was the cauſe that occaſioned me to withdraw myſelf from the caſtle.* —*It was conſcience*, Alphonſo! *Start not: I am a wretch unworthy of a thought. I may one day unfold a tale of horror: you will then know what a monſter I am: yet if a ſincere repentance can atone for my paſt crimes, I may ſtill hope for pardon. I muſt lay aſide my pen* —*my reaſon almoſt fails me.*——

"I have walked off the agitation of my mind, and am more composed. Monsieur L———, *at* Vienna, *will remit you what cash you may need. I would wish you to reside in the castle. I repeat, it is yours. I have been an usurper of your rights. Your father was my elder brother, not the younger, as I always pretended.*

"Farewell, I must go far—far distant from hence. Do not detest the remembrance of me.

"F. DE COURVILLE."

Alphonso turned pale as he perused the letter, which, instead of clearing up the mystery, involved him in still greater perplexity. It seemed written with an air of calm despondence; and he hesitated whether he should acquaint the peasant and his wife with the contents. He at length determined to keep some parts of it a secret; he therefore only read that part of it to them which concerned his residing at the castle, and the money in the hands of Monsieur *L*———. The man listened with an air of impatience, and, when he had finished, asked, if that was all. *Alphonso* replied, there was not any thing more of consequence. The man still seemed dissatisfied, and walked out of the room with an appearance of chagrin. *Alphonso* observed it, but imputed it to his doubts of being rewarded sufficiently for his trouble, though he had too much delicacy to take any notice of it. In a few days part of the castle was ready for his reception; and with an heavy heart, he once more took possession of the place where he had passed his days of childhood. These were no more; and with increase of years, increase of trouble seemed to threaten his future hours. He looked forward with anxiety for the time when he should once more see his beloved *Julia*. His fears for her welfare almost obliterated the thoughts of his uncle's letter, which, when he did think of it, served but to increase his uneasiness. He wandered about the castle, to divert the melancholy which preyed upon his mind, and would frequently bewilder himself in the numerous windings of the stair-case, from which issued smaller ones, leading to the different wings of the castle.

One day, as he was musing on his troubles, his progress was impeded by a large iron door, which he had never before seen. Observing the situation of it, he found he was in the north wing of the castle, the part which was reported to be haunted, Unheedful of that, he endeavoured to open it. On his pushing it with violence, it gave way (for it was not fastened), and opened with a creaking noise. He entered a large furnished apartment, which seemed to have been used as a hall. In this apartment there were two doors, but they were both fastened with strong iron bars and padlocks, and *Alphonso* was obliged to return without satisfying his curiosity; but he determined to bring *Philip* with him the next day, and try to break the door. With a little difficulty he found the right stair-case, and went back to his chamber. He spent the rest of the day till *Philip* came in from

the village, which was about ten miles distant from the castle, in writing to the baron, to relate the events which had occurred since he left him. When he had finished, he told *Philip* of the doors which he had found in the apartment, and desired him to get some instruments proper to force them. *Philip* endeavoured to dissuade him from undertaking so dangerous an enterprise, as he termed it. *Alphonso* laughed at his ridiculous fears, and bade him obey his orders. *Philip* trembled—"For mercy's sake, sir, consider what you are going to do; who knows but those rooms are really haunted, and by venturing into them, you may incur the displeasure of the spirits?"—"I thank you for your care," said *Alphonso*, "but must again tell you it is needless: my resolution is fixed; and were all the old women in the village to come and assist you in your idle tales, they never could change my determination. I have told you my mind: look to it." *Philip* left the room, muttering at his master's rashness, which he found it was in vain to persuade him to relinquish. When he was gone, *Alphonso* threw himself upon the bed, and tried to banish in sleep the uneasy thoughts which crowded on his imagination. But vain were his efforts: the rooms, his uncle's letter, all filled his mind with perplexity; and the morning found him in the same state as when he first lay down to rest.

As soon as day-light appeared, *Alphonso* hurried on his clothes, and summoned *Philip*, who very reluctantly complied, and fetched the instruments which he had prepared for breaking the door. When every thing was ready, they sallied forth, *Alphonso*, at *Philip*'s earnest request, carrying his sword in his hand. When they reached the great door, they found very little violence was necessary; for the wood was so rotten that a few blows shattered it to pieces. They entered a large gloomy apartment which still contained the remains of former magnificence. There were four windows, but at such a heighth from the ground, that *Alphonso* was under the necessity of getting on a chair to see what part of the country they overlooked. The prospect before him was wide and dreary: a few huts were scattered here and there, and a chain of mountains terminated the view. On turning to get down, he perceived something on the floor. It was a book; he stooped to pick it up. But what horror did he feel when he saw the floor stained with blood! In one part was the exact print of a hand, and the traces of the fingers continued as if the body had been dragged along some paces further. *Philip*, who kept close behind him, observed it at the same moment, and was so overcome with terror that *Alphonso* could scarcely support him. He placed him on a seat, and sat down by him. As he sat, he felt the wainscot shake, and turning to discover the cause, perceived the pannel move. He pushed it back with his hand, and found it opened wide enough to admit his body through. He determined to enter and examine whither it led. *Philip* entreated in vain; *Alphonso* was resolute, and thinking it better to go on than to return back alone, he tremblingly followed *Alphonso* into

a long dark paſſage. They groped their way for a conſiderable time, till at length they ſaw a faint light at a ſmall diſtance. Overjoyed to ſee the light again, they haſtened toward it, and found themſelves in a ſmall room, which, on a more attentive obſervation, *Alphonſo* recollected to be the ſame he had before ſeen behind his uncle's picture, on his firſt viewing the caſtle. *Philip*, glad to find himſelf in his own part of the caſtle, as he termed it, fell on his knees, and entreated *Alphonſo* to give over his ſearch for that day. In pity to his fears, his maſter complied, and they entered *Alphonſo's* bed-room; where they ſat down and diſcourſed on what they had ſeen. *Alphonſo* recollected the book he had found, and ſtill had in his pocket. He took it out, and opening it, read in the firſt page the name of *Roſalie de Courville*. A dreadful idea now flaſhed on his mind, and he exclaimed in a voice of anguiſh: "They have murdered my mother!" The agitation of his mind overpowered him, and he ſunk lifeleſs on the bed, by the ſide of which he ſat. *Philip* was almoſt diſtracted; he flew backward and forward calling for help. Luckily the peaſant at that juncture happened to call to know if they wanted any thing. *Philip* entreated his aſſiſtance, which he readily gave. They undreſſed *Alphonſo*, and made him take ſome wine, which a little revived him. The next day he was ſo much recovered, that he reſolved to renew his ſearch. He accordingly ordered *Philip* to prepare ſome lights for the purpoſe of examining the dark paſſage. They went into the room adjoining his bed-chamber, but were much ſurpriſed at not being able to find the entrance from the paſſage. They looked all round in vain. *Alphonſo* at length determined to go once more into the great room, though he could not avoid feeling a ſecret horror when he again entered the place. He turned his eyes to take one more view of it, and ſaw a large cheſt in one corner, which he had not obſerved before. His curioſity was now awakened, and he wiſhed, yet dreaded, to ſee the contents of this cheſt. His reſolution was ſoon fixed, and he took out of his pocket a bunch of keys which he had found in ſome of the other apartments. He tried them, and found one which opened the lock. *Philip* held the lid up, while *Alphonſo* raiſed a folded piece of baize, under which was the body of a woman; though the features were ſo much decayed that it was impoſſible to recognize them. A cold ſhivering ſeized *Alphonſo* as he viewed the horrid ſpectacle, which confirmed his former ſuſpicions. He haſtily cloſed the cheſt, and beckoning *Philip* to follow him, haſtened out of the room, locking the door after him. When he reached his own room, he ordered *Philip* to go immediately and ſaddle their horſes, for he was determined never to reſt till he found the perpetrator of the horrid deed. *Philip* entreated him to conſider the time of the evening was improper to begin a journey, it being then eight o'clock. *Alphonſo* was convinced of his error, and agreed to wait till the next morning. He deſired *Philip*, in the mean time, to obſerve the greateſt ſecrecy reſpecting what they had ſeen; he

then diſmiſſed him, and threw himſelf upon the bed. Horrid dreams diſturbed his reſt; the ſpirits of his parents ſeemed continually flitting before him: toward morning he dropt into a ſhort ſlumber, from which he was awakened by *Philip* telling him the horſes were ready.

Alphonſo now roſe, no longer the gay and handſome *Alphonſo* he had once been, but a pale emaciated figure, with the appearance of one in the laſt ſtage of life. His mind was diſturbed with a variety of conflicting motions: his eyes, ſunk and ſpiritleſs, plainly indicated how ill he had reſted the preceding night. After a ſlight repaſt, he ſecured all the doors, and making a memorandum of the ſituation in which he left the apartments in the caſtle, with ſlow and heavy ſteps he paſſed the hall.

The cloſing of the heavy door roufed him from the ſtupor into which he had fallen, and recalled his wandering imagination to the unhappy purpoſe of his intended adventure. He now for the firſt time recollected the inconſiſtency of his plan, in ſetting out in ſearch of he knew not whom; his beloved *Julia* obtruded on his mind, and he reſolved to viſit the baron her father, and making him acquainted with the ſhocking circumſtance, aſk his advice. He remembered, alſo, that it would be neceſſary to make ſome plauſible excuſe to the cottager for his abrupt departure. He therefore turned his horſe toward the cottage, and being under the neceſſity of telling them a falſehood, ſaid, that he had received a letter from the baron *de Stainville*, which informed him that his preſence was abſolutely neceſſary; giving them a ſtrict charge not to let the caſtle be entered, on pain of his diſpleaſure. The man promiſed he ſhould be obeyed, and *Alphonſo*, having aſſured him that he ſhould not be long abſent, and made him a preſent for his trouble, departed.

He took the road to *Naples*, and night coming on as he had juſt reached an inn at the entrance of *Caſtille*, he determined to halt, and retiring to the room allotted for him, ſat himſelf down to conſider his preſent ſituation. The money he had with him was nearly exhauſted, and it was now impoſſible for him to obtain a freſh ſupply; he muſt therefore be indebted to the baron *de Stainville* for the preſent. He reflected alſo that it would be impoſſible for him to marry *Julia*, in his preſent ſituation; as, though his whole dependence was on the friendſhip of her father, yet he could not imagine he would ever conſent to her union with one, neither poſſeſſed of friends nor fortune. His reverie was interrupted by a deep groan from the room adjoining that in which he was: the ſound ſtartled him, and he liſtened attentively for ſome time. It was repeated: after which, ſome words ſeemed to be uttered by the ſame perſon, but in ſo low a voice that it was impoſſible to underſtand the purport of them. A third groan ſucceeded, accompanied by a faint ſhriek. *Alphonſo* imagined he might be capable of affording aſſiſtance. He ſoftly opened the door, and perceived a man lying on the bed, ſeemingly in the agonies of death; a beautiful female was kneeling by the bed-ſide; her hair, without any covering, hung looſe

and diſhevelled about her ſhoulders; her dreſs was in the utmoſt diſorder, and torn in many parts. The ſight awed *Alphonſo* ſo much, that he knew not whether to advance or recede. He had not time to conſider; for the lady looking round, uttered a loud ſcream, and fainted in his arms. He now found it was his dear *Julia* he held in his arms, and endeavoured to recal her to life by calling on her name repeatedly. After ſome moments ſhe recovered, and pointed to the bed.

The ſick perſon had juſt opened his eyes, and fixing them upon *Alphonſo*, exclaimed, "Take him away, I have not murdered him. Why does he come to torment me?" The well-known voice vibrated on the ears of *Alphonſo*, and with horror he found it to be his uncle. He flew toward him, forgetting in an inſtant all his former meditations of revenge; he graſped his almoſt lifeleſs hand, and bathed it with bitter tears. His uncle forcibly ſnatched it away, and ſtarting wildly up in bed, cried, "Keep him off! I did not do it; it was his father, not he, that injured me." Then he ſunk back, and ſeemed to be thinking on ſomething very earneſtly. He looked at *Alphonſo* again; and ſaid in a kind of whiſper, "yet he looks kinder than the others; perhaps he does not know what I have done."

Alphonſo could no longer ſupport the diſtreſſing ſcene, and drew toward the window. When he was out of ſight, his uncle fell into a doze. *Julia* adviſed *Alphonſo* to keep where he was, leſt the ſight of him, when he awoke, might be attended with dangerous conſequences. The entrance of the phyſician interrupted their converſation; and he having felt his pulſe, declared he had no hopes, yet deſired he might be kept quite ſtill, as he might perhaps have one more interval of reaſon, but it entirely depended on his being kept perfectly quiet. After preſcribing the medicine he thought neceſſary for his patient, he departed.

Alphonſo and *Julia* continued to watch the patient, through the night; and when the morning approached, he awoke, and looking at *Julia*, ſaid, "I have had a delightful dream. I thought I ſaw *Alphonſo*; but it cannot be." *Julia* finding it was a proper opportunity to introduce him, anſwered, that if ſhe thought he would not be too much agitated, ſhe would tell him ſomething that would pleaſe him." He promiſed to be compoſed. She then told him, that ſhe had ſent for *Alphonſo*, and expected him to arrive hourly.

"I wiſh," ſaid he, "that he would come, for I am afraid I ſhall never live to ſee him. If I do not, give him the packet which you will find in my coat-pocket, and beg him to pray for me." *Julia* perceived he was affected. Pretended to liſten. "Hark!" ſaid ſhe: "there is *Alphonſo*." She then went toward the door, and drew *Alphonſo* to the bed. His uncle feebly held out his hand to him, but could not utter a word. *Alphonſo* took it, and dropped on his knees. His uncle raiſed himſelf up; and looking wiſhfully, exclaimed, "heaven bleſs you, and forgive me!" then uttering a deep groan, fell back and expired.

As ſoon as the firſt ſhock occaſioned by the news of the death

of the count was over, *Alphonso* proceeded to search for the packet which his uncle had mentioned; and having wiped away a tear to the memory of his former tender protection, he began to read the paper; the contents of which were as follows:—

The History of FERNANDO COURVILLE.

"My father, the only remaining son and heir of the illustrious house of *De Courville*, had early in life, to gratify the wish of the old count his father, married a lady of equal descent with himself, though at the same time he had no great inclination to marry. The lady his father had selected for him was far from being calculated to render the married state agreeable; she was excessively capricious; and if not immediately gratified in whatever she wished, would throw herself into pretended fits. My father, wearied with her continual ill temper, soon entirely neglected her, and frequently absented himself from home. But her pregnancy being now far advanced, as he was fearful of losing his first hope by her sudden starts of passion, he paid her more than common attention. She was very shortly after delivered of a son who was named, after his father, *Alphonso*. My father was extremely delighted, and it seemed as if his whole life were wrapped up in this his darling. At length, after the charms of novelty had ceased, he relapsed into his former indifference. One afternoon, after he had been absent three or four days, being rather fatigued, returning to his chamber, he was surprised to find the door fastened on the inside. He immediately called to my mother, who was within, desiring her to open it. He heard a faint scuffle within, and in a few minutes she opened the door, and apologised for keeping him waiting, as she had been asleep. My father made no reply, but walked to the window, which was open, and looking out, saw a man running along the parapet. He turned round, fury flashing in his eyes. "Wretch!" exclaimed he, "instantly inform me who that villain is, who, I am confident, has been in this apartment." She fell on her knees, assuring him she had never injured him in any respect, and that chance alone had caused him to be there. She still endeavoured to conceal his name, till my father, drawing his sword, threatened her with immediate death; when she tremblingly replied, it was *Felix*. "What!" re-echoed my father, "*Felix*, my valet! 'Tis well madam: your paramour shall instantly leave the house." He kept his word. *Felix* received his dismissal, frantic with fear; and happy in escaping chastisement, departed immediately. My father ordered a separate apartment from my mother, who now, too late, saw her imprudent conduct. With a desperate resolve, she forced herself into his presence, entreating in the most submissive manner for pardon. In vain did she sue; my father was inexorable, and spurned her from him. Real fits succeeded, and in this situation she was delivered of me. Her life was for some time despaired of;

at length she recovered. An inveterate hatred to her husband succeeded. He could never be prevailed upon to see me, as he had great reason to suppose I was illegitimate. He paid a greater attention than ever to my brother *Alphonso*, who throve rapidly. My mother was so enraged, that she endeavoured, as I grew in years, to fix an implacable resentment in my youthful mind against my father and brother, for such in reality they were. She unhappily succeeded but too well. A new cause of dislike soon took place. *Alphonso* being of an age to leave home, was sent to the university, and returned so accomplished, that I, from envy of his superior endowments, actually felt that hatred which had been before nourished by the unremitting assiduity of my mother. I had, to be sure, private masters for my instruction; but as my education was not the same my brother received, I did not imagine it could be in any manner so beneficial to me. Every little childish whim was indulged by my mother, who imagined her future schemes of revenge centered in me: and as I early displayed a propensity to vice, instead of repelling it, she artfully encouraged it to that excess, that it ever remained in me. My mother's horrible design never succeeded in her life; for she was one night seized in a fit, in which she expired. I did not feel that affection for her at her death, which a child naturally does for a parent, who has been taught by them to honour their virtues. On the contrary, I seemed to have got rid of a tormentor, and thought I should now be master of myself. In that I was deceived: for my father, having ordered my mother to be interred with the respect due to her as countess *de Courville*, yet without that pomp she would have claimed had his affection never been estranged from her, immediately received me into the family, and I was treated in every respect like my brother, except in my father's caresses. With rage I beheld his partiality for him, and determined at a future day to gratify my thirst for revenge.—Here would I draw a veil over the remainder of my guilty career. My whole frame turns black with horror, as I think of the deeds which I am about to reveal; yet, as I have begun, I will struggle with my feelings, and though I harrow up my very soul in the recital, will still persevere. And, oh! may it prove a wholesome admonition to youths, to conquer with unremitting vigilance even the slightest incitement to vice; and may parents take warning by my unhappy one, to be careful to instil early principles of rectitude and honour into the minds of their children. But to proceed. My brother, who, as he had been properly educated, ever placed his confidence in his father, now acquainted him with his prepossession in favour of an amiable young lady, sister to one of his fellow-collegians, and asked permission to pay his addresses to her. My father, confident that the affections of his son would never be placed on an undeserving object, readily gave his consent, and they were soon after married. Amid the joy and hilarity of the wedding, I lost my usual sullenness, and joined in the festivity. The lovely *Rosalia* attracted

my notice, and I secretly wished she had fallen to my lot: yet my wishes were then unmixed with those guilty ideas which afterward took place. My father's death, who had long been in a declining state, terminated the rejoicing. I joined with my brother in unfeigned lamentation, and was for some time inconsolable. This sorrow soon gave place to my former malice, when, upon opening the will, I found that he had left his whole estate to my brother, at the same time enjoining him to be my guardian till I came of age, which I wanted two years of; and after that, I was to be allowed two thousand a year, while I continued worthy of his favour; but if I proved undeserving, I was to be left entirely at his mercy. I stifled my resentment as much as I was able, and assumed the resemblance of great affection for *Alphonso*; while he, trusting in his own rectitude, did not suspect the fraud which I was practising upon him, and treated me with the greatest tenderness. The opportunities I now had of being with his wife, created in me a passion for her, which I determined to gratify; and I continually persecuted her with my assiduities. When I first declared my sentiments, she started from me with detestation in her looks; and nothing prevented her acquainting my brother but her fear of embittering his future hours with continual apprehension. She ever after avoided me with the greatest caution. Stung to the quick at the denial I had received, I meditated a most bloody revenge. I accordingly one day decoyed my man, a poor harmless youth, into the remotest part of the castle, on pretence of something I wished to remove; when drawing my sword, I bade him prepare for death. He begged to know his crime. I evaded his question, telling him I did not chuse to enter into particulars at that time, but that I would spare his life on one condition. He promised faithfully he would comply with whatever I desired. I made him on his knees take the most solemn oath that imagination could devise; which done, with a savage joy I bade him rise: then taking a dagger from my pocket, and presenting it to him, "here," said I, "take it," my hand trembling as I held it toward him; "my brother possesses my right—dispatch him—you understand me—be quick and sure."———

Alphonso gave a scream of horror; the paper dropt from his hands; a mist gathered before his eyes, and his arms drop motionless by his side. *Julia* in vain called on his name; he was insensible to every thing around him, and remained in that state for some time.

After a short time *Alphonso* recovered himself sufficiently to proceed with the narrative:—

"The poor wretch received the dagger in speechless agony. I immediately quitted the place, that I might not be any more witness to his emotion, for my heart was not then sufficiently callous to talk with composure of the bloody act we were about to perpetrate. Some days elapsed ere I heard any further concerning the business. One morning my man watched an oppor-

tunity to speak to me, and informed me, in faltering accents, that he had considered the matter, and judged it would be imprudent to shed blood, but had thought of a scheme which he made no doubt would meet my concurrence. I desired to be made acquainted with it. It was to decoy my brother from the house, with some well fabricated tale of distress, to which he would listen with avidity, and contrive to have him drowned in the moat, which was deep enough, at the north end of the castle; and thus, he said, when his body should be found, his death would be more easily imputed to accident. To what lengths will the love of life carry a man!- The plan seemed more safe than what I had first suggested; and we determined to adopt it. We did so; it succeeded to our most sanguine wishes; and your father was, one foggy evening, precipitated into eternity, to satisfy the ambition and diabolical desires of an unnatural brother. Yet think not that he escaped punishment. No, *Alphonso!* his every succeeding hour has been embittered with the pangs of a guilty conscience, the most severe punishments in this life, and the cause of endless misery in a future. Your mother was for some time inconsolable; nothing but her affection for you could have preserved her life. You were then about five years old, and the smiling image of your ill-fated father. After a decent time had elapsed, I again renewed my importunities to your mother, and even offered her marriage. My proposals were received with increased disdain. This roused my violent temper. I knew full well that the likeness you bore to your father served to keep him in her memory, and I determined to separate you. I caused you to be torn from her arms, and herself to be confined in an apartment adjoining mine; while a report was circulated that she had destroyed herself by some unknown means. Her faithful attendant also was ensnared into a gloomy chamber, in the most remote part of the castle, where I imagined her secure from any communication with your mother. I supplied them with food. You were admitted to her presence occasionally, to make her more ardently wish for liberty. But even that strong incitement was insufficient—such was her just abhorrence of me. Several years elapsed in this manner; when one morning I went to *Rosalia*'s apartment to renew my proposals, and was most dreadfully alarmed to find it deserted. *Rosalia* was not to be found. I cast my eyes toward the window. It was secure as usual; no pannel was removed, nor could I discover any means by which she could have escaped. I immediately repaired to the chamber of her attendant. She was sitting at the table, reading. I flew toward her, and seized her arm, in a frantic manner, demanding *Rosalia*. I accused her of assisting *Rosalia* to escape. She replied, with heroism, 'I have assisted her, and glory in the act of rescuing her from the power of a tyrant.' I demanded to know the manner of her escape. She smiled at my threats, and scornfully refused to tell me. I was no longer

master of myself. I drew my sword, and plunged it into her body. She fell, and expired in a few moments."——

"Thank heaven," interrupted *Alphonso*, "it was not the body of my mother. Perhaps she yet lives." He proceeded with the history:

"Remorse instantly took possession of my soul. I shuddered at the act I had committed. I stood petrified with horror. Fears for my own safety prompted me to conceal the body. I looked round with dreadful apprehension, and found a large empty chest in the room, in which I carefully deposited the body, and quitted the apartment, which I never again entered. I have ever since remained ignorant of the means your mother used to make her escape, as to have made any inquiry among the domestics would have betrayed myself. I dismissed the deluded creature, who had first aided my crimes, as the sight of him was become odious to me, first binding him down by the strictest oaths to secrecy. He has since married, and resides in a cottage, some small distance from the castle. My conscience now smote me severely for my former crimes, and I determined, by the greatest attention to your morals, to atone in some measure for them. I really felt an affection for you, but the sight of you always revived terrific emotions in my mind, and I resolved, as soon as your age would permit, to send you abroad. I did so; but your departure, instead of alleviating my uneasiness, served but to increase it. Left to myself, my former deeds rushed upon my mind, and overpowered me. I could no longer bear the reflexion, and determined to quit the castle for ever, make a confession to you of my crimes, and lead a wandering life. I summoned my vassals together, told them that I intended to reside on an estate of mine in a distant country, and had no further occasion for their services, but discharged them. I left my orders with the cottager to admit no one into the castle but yourself, and to circulate the report of it being haunted. I then bade a long farewell to *De Courville Castle*."

The manuscript was finished, but one thing still remained to be cleared up, which was—how Julia and his uncle came together. "You know," (said *Julia*), "the terms upon which you and my father parted. It is necessary to say, how much I was interested in the event; and not hearing from you for a considerable time, caused me much uneasiness. My father earnestly endeavoured to persuade me that you had forgotten your *Julia*; but vanity, or some secret monitor, whispered the contrary, and I flattered myself that by some accident your letters had been intercepted. About that time an event happened which was near separating us for ever. My father was returning one evening from a visit to the hermit, and was overtaken by some of those banditti by whom you was so great a sufferer at the time we first became acquainted. But by the timely assistance of a gentleman, who with his servant was riding past, they dispersed the ruffians, and my father was rescued. Gratitude to his preserver

obliged my father to invite the ſtranger home. Alas! it was near becoming a fatal invitation to me. He ſtaid with us a week, and during that time conceived an unfortunate prepoſſeſſion in favour of me. I ſoon perceived his growing partiality; indeed, I muſt have been blind had I not; his attentions were ſo particular as to leave no room for doubt. The conſequence was an application to my father, who readily gave his conſent, provided I could conſider myſelf as free from my engagement to you. He flew to me with my father's anſwer. I received his propoſals with diſdain, and aſſured him that I would never become his wife. He caſt a malicious glance at me, and left the houſe that day in high diſpleaſure. About three days after, as I was taking a walk in the adjoining wood, as was uſually my cuſtom, I was forcibly ſeized by two men, who bound my mouth and eyes. When they gave me my liberty I found myſelf in a carriage, ſeated by that odious villain who had thus violated the laws of hoſpitality.—'Now, madam,' ſaid the wretch, 'I think I can repay your diſdain, and be aſſured, you ſhall never become my wife.' I ſhuddered at his words, yet paid no ſeeming attention to them. We travelled at a great rate, and I fainted through fear and want of air, for the blinds had been kept cloſe drawn up. When I recovered, the windows were quite open, and the carriage ſtanding ſtill. A gentleman rode by. I had the preſence of mind to ſcream out, and call for aſſiſtance. He inſtantly forced the coachman from his box, and opening the coach-door, demanded why I was detained. The wretch immediately drew a piſtol from his pocket, and diſcharged it; but the bullet miſſed your uncle—for he it was, whom providence had ſent to reſcue me. Your uncle in his turn drew another piſtol, which he fired with better ſucceſs; his adverſary fell, uttering dreadful imprecations. He however had the malice to fire again as he fell, and the ball penetrated your uncle's ſhoulder. By this time a number of people had come up to us; for the coachman had run to an inn, which providentially was not far diſtant, to procure aſſiſtance. They conveyed us to it; your uncle was put to bed, and a ſurgeon was ſent for, who, upon his arrival, pronounced the wound to be mortal. What muſt have been my ſituation but for your fortunate arrival! I now entreat you to conduct me to my father's as ſoon as poſſible, as I cannot with propriety remain longer in my preſent ſituation. I have only to add, that your uncle, when he was aſſured of his approaching diſſolution, entreated that his remains might be conveyed to *De Courville Caſtle*."

Julia ceaſed. *Alphonſo* ſtill remained in a muſing poſture. He was perplexed to know how to act. He was equally convinced with *Julia* of the impropriety of her continuing with him; yet his uncle's corpſe could not poſſibly remain at the inn. He thought of a plan, yet he did not like to propoſe it to *Julia*. Her thoughts had been occupied by the ſame ſubject: and the ſame thought had ſtruck her. She therefore ſaved *Alphonſo* the

pain of the propofal. "I know," faid fhe, "it is inconvenient for you to return with me Suppofe you let *Philip* go; he will prove a fufficient protection."—"Will my *Julia*," exclaimed *Alphonfo*, "put up with his protection?"—"Surely," faid fhe, feeing he was extremely agitated, "we fhall meet the fooner for it. *Philip* will make an excellent conductor."—"He is a worthy fellow," replied *Alphonfo*, "and will protect you to the laft moment of his life."—"I can truft in him," returned *Julia*; "fo to-morrow I propofe to take leave of you."

Alphonfo fighed at the mention of taking leave; a fatality feemed to attend them, and ftill threatened to feparate them. They both retired to reft in very ill fpirits. *Julia* rofe early *Alphonfo* was already rifen. They ate a fparing breakfaft; a chaife waited to convey *Julia*; they took a hafty farewell. *Philip* mounted his horfe, and they drove off. *Alphonfo* feemed to have loft his very life; he remained quite inanimate. The noife the men made in bringing up his uncle's coffin roufed him from his lethargy, and he bethought him of his melancholy office; the day paffed heavily on; night came—a fleeplefs one to *Alphonfo*. The morning arrived, the hearfe was in readinefs, and the corpfe was depofited in it. He ordered it to follow him at a flow pace; he himfelf was to be at the caftle to prepare for the melancholy ceremony. He fettled with his hoft, mounted his horfe, and fet off for *D. Courville Caftle*.

When *Alphonfo* reached the caftle, the man whom he had brought with him as a fubftitute for *Philip* appeared not a little difmayed at the defolate appearance of the place; but *Alphonfo* having, by liberal offers, banifhed part of his fears, they rode round to the village, and hired fome men to aflift in clearing the rubbifh and weeds from the principal entrance of the caftle. With fome difficulty they opened the great gates, which creaked with difguiting noife upon their ruffy hinges, and found the caftle exactly in the fituation he left it. The recollection of the caufe of his laft quitting it, and the melancholy one of his return to it, rufhed with force upon his mind, and he leaned his head againft the wall in filent agony. The men ftared at him with ftupid wonder; but recollecting himfelf, he ftarted up, and led the way to his apartment. A fire was foon kindled by a lanthorn which they brought with them; and *Alphonfo* then inftructed the men in their feveral departments, and before night the grand hall was rendered fit for the reception of his uncle's body. The vault was then opened. *Alphonfo* took a torch, and defcended into it; but the noifome damps of the place almoft ftifled him. He caft his eyes around; and a coffin, newer than the reft, attracted his notice. He approached, and viewed the plate. It was that of his father. He dropt his torch, and knelt by the fide of his coffin.—"Shade of my reverend parent!" exclaimed he, "let me not incur thy anger, that I dare thus to violate thy fanctuary, by admitting the remains of thy murderer—witnefs my filial tears." He was interrupted by a faint

ſcream, and a noiſe which ſeemed as if ſome great weight had fallen. He ſtarted from his knees, and looked round; but his torch was extinguiſhed. He liſtened; all was ſtill. He drew his ſword from the ſcabbard, and groped about for the ſteps. For ſome time his ſearch was in vain, and he ſtumbled conſtantly over broken pieces of coffins; till at length, at ſome diſtance, he perceived a glimmering light. For ſome minutes he was unreſolved whether to advance or recede. He plainly diſtinguiſhed the forms of ſeveral men ſlowly advancing, and heard his own name diſtinctly repeated. His fear ſo nearly overcame him, that it was ſome time before he could recal his ſcattered ſenſes ſufficiently to recogniſe his own attendants, who, finding him continue ſo long in the vaults, began to be alarmed, and had, though with great dread, deſcended in ſearch of him; he having wandered in the dark ſo far from the entrance, that he did not recollect the ſituation ſufficiently to prevent his fright at their approach. He forbore to mention to them the ſcream he had heard, leſt it ſhould depreſs their ſpirits, and only told them that he had let his torch fall, and thereby extinguiſhed it.

When they had completed their buſineſs, he diſmiſſed all but the one he deſigned to keep in his ſervice until the return of *Philip*. With him he retired to his chamber, and endeavoured to recruit his ſpirits with a bottle of wine (for they had provided themſelves with whatever they thought would be requiſite); but he vainly endeavoured to impute the ſound he had heard to imagination; it ſeemed ſtill to ring through his ears with additional horror. His haraſſed ſpirits demanded reſt; and he accordingly retired to a chamber which had formerly been *Philip*'s, and, ſecuring the door, ſunk upon the bed. He had ſlumbered about an hour, when he was rouſed by a loud noiſe in the corner of the room. He raiſed his head from his pillow, and liſtened attentively; it was ſilent; and he once more compoſed himſelf to reſt. He was again ſtartled by a violent ſhaking of the curtains of his bed. The moon then ſuddenly emerged from a cloud; and by her light he perceived a figure, of enormous bulk, at his bed-ſide. He immediately graſped his ſword, and jumped up, when the figure retreated. He ſtarted from the bed, and purſued it round the room. The moon was again obſcured, and he was left in darkneſs. He groped about, till a door was flapped with violence in his face. Terror now totally overpowered him, and the ſword dropt from his hand. He continued transfixed with aſtoniſhment, till a violent knocking at his door recalled his ſenſes. For ſome time he was irreſolute, till the voice of his ſervant demanding entrance, cheered him; and with ſome difficulty he found the door, which he opened. The man inſtantly caught hold of him, exclaiming, "for heaven's ſake, ſir, ſave me! Let us quit this dreadful caſtle to-morrow. You have ſurely let all the ſpirits out of the vault; and they are determined to torment us for diſturbing them." The mention of the vault revived in *Alphonſo* the re-

membrance of his adventure in that place. He was for ſome time unable to reply; at length he demanded of the man, if he had heard any thing.—"Aye," ſaid the fellow, "I believe I have. Why, I thought my door would have been burſt open; for there was a rare puſh againſt it; it made it crack again." *Alphonſo* was more and more ſurpriſed: he determined to diſcover the myſtery, but forbore to urge the man further at that time, leſt he ſhould augment his fear. Day in a great meaſure diſpelled their terror, and they diſcourſed calmly on the ſubject. *Alphonſo*, after a time, by expoſtulation, entreaty, and offers of a liberal reward, obtained from the man a promiſe to watch with him the enſuing night. Their attention was ſo much engroſſed, that they thought not of repoſe; and the arrival of a peaſant announced the approach of the corpſe, before they had broke their faſt. The gates were thrown open, and the body of the count decently committed to the vault; after which it was once more cloſed by the ruſtics, all of whom he diſmiſſed, except one.

Alphonſo, again left to reflexion, pondered in his mind his ſtrange deſtiny. "Surely," ſaid he to himſelf, "I am doomed to be the ſport of fortune, purſuing, by a ſtrange fatality, ſhadows which vaniſh from my graſp. while others continually riſe to haraſs my ſpirits, already almoſt broken by diſappointment and ſorrow. Oh! my *Julia*, even now, perhaps, you may be in need of my arm, to ſave you from ſome unforeſeen danger. May you not be at this moment calling upon thy *Alphonſo* to reſcue thee, in vain, while he is perhaps ruſhing into eternity unbidden, and may, ere to-morrow's dawn, be numbered among the ſilent dead? Had I not better quit this ſpot, by horrid murder ſtained, where injured ſpirits call aloud for vengeance, and with my *Julia* ſeek ſome peaceful cot, where, with her, I may ſpend my future days in domeſtic happineſs, far from the pomp and fatigue of grandeur? But Oh! my parents, hard is the ſtruggle betwixt love and filial piety?"

This ſoliloquy was interrupted by his attendants, who entered to know his orders concerning the propoſed plan. *Alphonſo*, after ſome conſideration, reſolved to abide the event. He accordingly deſired the men to procure ſome wine from the village, and to keep a large fire, two moſt requiſite things for ſo cheerleſs an adventure. The intermediate ſpace between them and the time appointed for them to ſtation themſelves, he determined to fill up by inſpecting the caſtle. He reviſited all the rooms, and found them as he had left them. The apartment where he had before beheld the horrible ſpectacle ſhocked him greatly; and cloſing the door with diſguſt, he deſcended the ſtairs. The men ſoon returned with the wine; they took ſome ſlight refreſhment, and betook themſelves to their watch. They drew their chairs cloſe, and repleniſhed their glaſſes. All continued quiet; the bell ſlowly tolled one, and the men began to nod. *Alphonſo* continued in a muſing poſture, but was ſoon

ſtartled by the opening of the door of the ſmall cloſet, over which the portrait of his uncle had hung. He concealed the light, the better to obſerve what paſſed. A figure, ſhocking to behold, entered; it appeared to be a human form, but the ſex could not be diſtinguiſhed; a ragged mantle covered its ſhoulders, and fell on the ground, and a quantity of long black hair hung over the face, and entirely concealed it. One arm was bare, and dreadfully torn, with which it graſped a ruſty dagger; the other held a human ſkull. It walked with a ſolemn ſtep to the window, where it continued ſome time with its arms folded, then ſtarting with a haſty ſtep, turned to the bed, and groped about as in ſearch of ſome other object. *Alphonſo* thanked heaven for his eſcape, as he made no doubt he ſhould have been murdered, had he been in the bed; he advanced ſoftly behind the figure, while the men guarded the door. *Alphonſo* ſprung upon it, and wreſted the dagger from its hand; it uttered a tremendous ſcream, and fell to the ground.

The poor wretch was a conſiderable time before he had power to articulate a ſyllable; at length, raiſing his head, he fixed his eyes upon *Alphonſo*, exclaiming, "O ſave me! ſave me from that horrid phantom!" *Alphonſo* was very much agitated; he imagined he had heard the voice before; but where, he was at a loſs to conjecture. He raiſed the man from the ground, and, with the aſſiſtance of his attendants, placed him upon the chair; and removing the hair which covered his face, diſcovered, to his infinite aſtoniſhment, the peaſant formerly ſervant to his uncle, and the murderer of his father. "Villain!" exclaimed he, while every joint trembled with emotion, "vengeance is now within my reach. Prepare to expiate all thy crimes. In me behold the injured *Alphonſo*." His arm was uplifted to give the blow; when, roufed by the impending danger, the man ſprang forward, and averted the ſtroke. "Hold, hold! I conjure you," cried he, frantickly, "I am not the monſter you ſuppoſe. Your father died not by my hands."—"Beware," cried *Alphonſo*, "how you deceive me; think not to dupe me by your deteſted artifices."—"Yet hear me, I entreat you," rejoined the man, dropping upon his knees; "my guilty ſtory muſt not be revealed at preſent, in conſequence of a moſt ſolemn vow exacted from me by your uncle. All I dare ſay is, that your father, in all probability, yet lives."—"Heaven be praiſed!" interrupted *Alphonſo*, "Riſe. I have now the power of abſolving you from your oath. The count is no more. Take therefore ſome refreſhment. In an hour I will return, and hear what you have to ſay in your defence; but, remember, upon your ſincerity depends your life." *Felix* bowed, and aſſured him he might depend upon his fidelity. *Alphonſo* then left him, and ſecured the door; leaving the ſervants to watch leſt he ſhould attempt to make his eſcape. He took a ſtroll round the caſtle, it being then morning. At the time appointed, he returned. *Felix* requeſted they might be private; and *Alphonſo*

laying his ſword before him, ordered the attendants to withdraw. The man then related what the reader is already acquainted with.

"I was greatly ſhocked," continued he, "at the count's propoſal; but I knew the violence of his temper too well to imagine that he would heſitate a moment to put his threats in execution. A plan providentially ſtruck me, which I reſolved to carry into execution without heſitation. I acquainted your father with the plot againſt his life, enforcing an oath of ſecrecy, and procured him the dreſs of a labouring man, in which he eſcaped from the caſtle. I then, by means of a trifling reward, prevailed upon a poor man, who worked in the village, to dreſs himſelf in your father's clothes, and go upon ſome pretended meſſage to the caſtle. The fogginess of the evening aſſiſted my deſign, and the poor unſuſpecting wretch was by my own hands precipitated into eternity. You may perhaps wonder why I ſhould ſcruple to ſacrifice your father at a time when I could unrelentingly put a period to the exiſtence of another. To my ſhame, I confeſs that it was not humanity which influenced me. Alas! No. I flattered myſelf that at at ſome future time the ſecret would be diſcovered by the remorſe of your uncle, and that I ſhould be handſomely rewarded. The corpſe paſſed very well for that of the count, and was interred with all funeral honours. The new count ſoon found an opportunity to diſcharge me from his ſervice, and ſettled me in the cot where you may recollect you firſt ſaw me. Your reſidence at the cottage roufed me to a ſenſe of the injuſtice I had been guilty of, and I lamented I had not defied the count's threats. The poor murdered victim ſeemed continually before my eyes, and diſturbed my mind with the moſt horrid reflexions. My wife ſaw my uneaſineſs, and inceſſantly importuned me to let her know the cauſe. Her ſolicitations vexed me, and I treated her with unuſual ſeverity. On a ſudden a great alteration took place in her behaviour, and ſhe ſcrupled not to tell me that ſhe ſuſpected there was no good going on, by my frequent abſence from home. Words followed words; ſhe ſaid, I had of late talked ſtrangely in my ſleep, and that ſhe had great reaſon to believe I had been guilty of murder; and threatened to have me apprehended, if I dared to uſe her ill again. I plainly ſaw ſhe would not fail to keep her word, and determined to get rid of ſo dangerous an accuſer. Guilt gradually ſteals upon the mind of man, and renders his heart callous to the calls of humanity. I felt very little compunction at ſhedding the blood of my unhappy wife, whom I buried at the end of my garden. Severe was my puniſhment; day and night her ghaſtly image floated before my eyes. My cottage became inſupportable; I quitted it, and ſought refuge in the deſolated caſtle. Solitude only increaſed my horror, and my reaſon was the ſacrifice. I have but a faint idea of what paſſed ſince then. How I ſubſiſted, I cannot tell. I only know, that I often ſought the count's

apartment, in hopes to murder him (for I forgot his having quitted the caſtle), and I remained chiefly in the vault among the coffins: and but for your courage in ſitting up laſt night, your life would have been ſacrificed through my miſtake. I have now made a full confeſſion of my guilt, and leave it to your generoſity to diſpoſe of me as you think proper. I am ready to ſubmit to the laws of my country."

He ended. *Alphonſo* pauſed ſome time. At length, ſaid he, "you muſt for the preſent remain my priſoner. I will conſider what is beſt to be done. Ill as you deſerve life at my hands, yet if I find your penitence to be ſincere, your puniſhment will be mitigated accordingly." He then quitted the room, leaving *Felix* guarded as before. The trampling of horſes feet drew him to the window; and, to his infinite joy, he ſaw his faithful *Philip* diſmount, covered with duſt. He ran haſtily to meet him, and interrogated him as to the cauſe of his ſpeed. Almoſt breathleſs with apprehenſion, he exclaimed, "How is my *Julia?* Is ſhe ſafe?"—"Safe enough, for aught I know," replied *Philip*. "For aught you know!" echoed *Alphonſo* indignantly. "What mean you?"—"I mean," rejoined *Philip*, ſmiling ſignificantly, "with ſubmiſſion to your honour's impatience, that I have had ſomething elſe to think of beſide madam *Julia*, dearly as ſhe is beloved by your honour and myſelf." *Alphonſo* was irritated beyond meaſure. "How dare you, inſolent fellow!" and his arm was uplifted; but he was ſtopt by *Philip*, who lifting up his arm with one hand, while he thruſt the other haſtily into his pocket, exclaimed, "Stop, ſtop, my dear good maſter. Don't put yourſelf in a paſſion. Firſt look at that," giving him a ſmall caſe, "and I am ſure you will not be angry long." *Alphonſo* opened it. "Heavens and earth!" cried he, "what do I behold?—The portrait of my mother! How came you by it?"—"That," ſaid *Philip* exultingly, "you ſhall be acquainted with in good time; but, at preſent, I am ſo confounded hungry, that I cannot poſſibly begin ſo long a ſtory till I have ſatisfied the cravings of nature: ſo, my good maſter, the ſooner the better; mean while you may amuſe yourſelf by contemplating the features of that ſweet lady." *Alphonſo* could not help ſmiling at his honeſt impertinence. "Really, *Philip*," ſaid he, "you are very inſolent to triſle thus with my feelings."—"Not at all, my dear maſter; do but conſider how you are triſling with mine. I have not taſted a morſel of food theſe ſix-and-thirty hours, and have rode poſt all the time; and you cannot have pity enough to reſerve your impatience till I have made my meal." *Alphonſo* found it vain to contend; he therefore directed him where to find ſome bread and ham, of which, with the addition of ſome wine, *Philip* made a moſt excellent repaſt, and liked it ſo well, that he tired *Alphonſo*'s patience to the utmoſt extent; which at laſt he gratified, by giving the following account of his expedition:—

"I conducted *Julia* safe to the baron's. He received her with transports, and bestowed numberless blessings upon you for your honourable conduct. He entertained me with liberality, and desired you would hasten with all possible speed to receive your reward; then dismissed me with a handsome present. I rode at a most furious rate for some miles, till both myself and horse were thoroughly fatigued. I looked round me, and perceived that I had missed the beaten track in my hurry, and had pursued one which led to quite a different path. Night grew on apace. I feared to return, lest I should involve myself still further in the intricacies of the path. As I looked round and round, I thought I saw a faint light glimmering through the hedge: I looked over, and found I was not deceived; but how to find the spot, was the greatest difficulty. I however determined, let what would be the event, to proceed forward. I spurred my horse, and went onward. I soon found myself at the entrance of a kind of cave, at the farther end of which I saw a lamp hung, which no doubt was the light of which I was in pursuit. I was at a loss whether to enter or not. Perhaps, thought I, it is the quarters of some of the banditti with which this place is infested. Upon second consideration, I alighted; and tying my horse to a tree, listened attentively at the mouth of the cave. I heard a low murmuring voice, seemingly in prayer. 'Oh, ho!' said I to myself, 'there is no harm here; banditti never pray.' So I mustered up all my courage, and entered a kind of chamber, rudely hewn out of the rock. At the further end was a bed, or pallet, upon which lay a venerable looking man. He held his beads in his hands, which were clasped together. He did not perceive me for some time; when he did, he seemed rather startled; but recovering himself, stretched out his hand, saying, 'come hither, my son. I have not beheld one of my fellow creatures for so long a time, that the sight of you rather alarmed me; but sure providence sent you to me at this critical moment, to ease my mind of a secret which I feared would die with me. You have an honest countenance.' You see, sir," said *Philip*, interrupting his story, "the old man had not forgot to compliment. 'However, I think,' continued he, 'I can confide in you.' I assured him, that I would do whatever was in my power to assist him. 'I am now,' said the hermit, 'past all human assistance. I feel the hour of my dissolution approaches fast. Listen then attentively to what I am about to relate. It is now, as near as I can calculate, about nine months and some odd weeks, that, as I was at my evening orisons, I heard a deep sigh, not many yards from me. I rose immediately, and hastened to the entrance of the cave, where I found a woman lying on the earth. Her dress was rent in many places, and her hands and arms, which were beautifully white, were terribly scratched. I endeavoured to raise her from the ground; she had apparently fainted from excessive fatigue and long fasting, for her body was

worn to a mere ſkeleton. My efforts at laſt ſucceeded, and I brought her into my retreat. My ſcanty fare of bread and water was all I had to offer her. Alas! it was but poor nouriſhment for one in her ſituation; ſhe, however, ate and drank greedily. I prevailed upon her to lie down upon my bed, and I ſat up in my old wooden chair. Her ſtrength was totally exhauſted, and nature demanded reſt. She ſlept for a few hours, and awoke much better. She then told me a tale of horror, which I am bound never to reveal, and entreated me to direct her to ſome place where ſhe might reſt in ſafety. I directed her, in the beſt manner I was able, to the convent of St. *Agnes*. I would have conducted her thither myſelf; but I am too feeble to walk ten yards. She thanked me in the moſt expreſſive manner, and departed in tears. Some time after ſhe was gone, I chanced to walk to the mouth of my cave. As I paſſed, I thought I ſaw ſomething glitter. I ſtooped for it, and picked up the picture which I now give you.' He then took this very miniature from under his pillow. 'I ſoon perceived,' continued the hermit, 'that it was the reſemblance of herſelf. I have never been able to get it conveyed to her ſince. What I requeſt of you is, that you will go to the convent, and find her out, which you eaſily will by the miniature, and beg her to remember poor father *Michael*.' The poor old man was quite ſpent. I promiſed to fulfil his requeſt. You may gueſs, ſir, with what joy I executed it. The poor hermit did not outlive that night. I left his corpſe where it was, and haſtened to the convent. I ſhowed the picture at the gate, and eaſily gained admittance to my dear miſtreſs. She, poor ſoul! did not know me. I related my meſſage, and delivered the picture. The neceſſary care was taken to inter the body of father *Michael*. I then proceeded to make myſelf known. The dear lady was almoſt frantic. She, with tranſport, ſent me forward to you, and bade me tell you ſhe dies with impatience to embrace her ſon. So away I fled, at the hazard of my neck, to relate the joyful tidings. Thus ends my ſtory."

Great as was the joy of *Alphonſo* at the proſpect of being once more enfolded in the arms of his mother, his ſatisfaction received ſome allay, from the uncertainty he was in reſpecting his father. "But, alas!" ſaid he to himſelf, "could he but be found, my happineſs would be complete. My *Julia* could not fail to meet their approbation, and our union would be ſanctioned by the bleſſing of our parents." Then turning to *Philip*, "where, my good friend, is the convent of St. *Agnes* ſituated?"—"It is in *Languedoc*," anſwered *Philip*. "I will ſet out at day-break," rejoined *Alphonſo*. "Oh, bleſs your ſoul!" cried *Philip*, eagerly, "it is full two days journey from hence. You cannot poſſibly go unattended. You will ſurely take me with you."—"Impoſſible," cried *Alphonſo*, "your preſence is abſolutely indiſpenſable at the caſtle. You muſt guard our priſoner till my return; beſide attending to the workmen who are

to be employed in repairing the castle for the reception of the countess my mother." *Philip* was very much displeased at this management. "I would give now," cried he peevishly," "—aye, I would give my very best doublet to witness the meeting. But, there now! that is always the way."—"*Philip*," said *Alphonso*, smiling, "I am gratified by your fidelity; but sure you are very regardless of your own interest, to be so little elated at the prospect of your preferment."—"Hang preferment!" replied he, "I would rather follow you, was it to the end of the world, than—but who in the name of wonder comes here?" and, without adding a word, he quitted the room precipitately; but presently returned with a letter, which he still retained in his hand, examining the superscription with great attention. "By our blessed lady!" resumed he, "here is some news. Pray, St. *Jerome*, our lady *Julia* be well; for it was brought by my old friend *Pedro*. But I did not stop to ask questions; and sure I am, it is a woman's hand-writing, the nurse's, mayhap." Impatient at his long harangue, *Alphonso* snatched the paper from his hand, broke the seal with eagerness, and read as follows:—

"*Will you*, Alphonso, *condemn your* Julia *for thus breaking through the bounds of propriety prescribed our sex, in thus addressing you?—No. I am certain the mind of him I write to is superior to so weak a prejudice. Why should the sentiments of the heart of the virtuous be concealed? Mine in favour of you I will never blush to acknowledge? But why have you been so long silent? I cannot, will not believe you unfaithful. Sickness, perhaps! and* Julia *is not near, to soothe, by her attentions, the hours of pain. Perhaps my too officious care exaggerates the cause. Pardon the misplaced zeal. Oh,* Alphonso! *great joy awaits you. Does not your heart tell the whole? Your father lives. If, as I trust, you are impatient to behold him, haste hither; for here he is to be found. Yes,* Alphonso, *he is here, and looks with affection on your* Julia, *calls her his dearly beloved daughter. Fly, then, upon the wings of love and duty. We are impatient for the return of the courier. Detain him no longer than to assure him of the state of your health, and dispatch him to your faithful*

JULIA DE STAINVILLE."

Alphonso perused the letter in ecstasy, and immediately ordered the messenger into his presence; and, after rewarding him handsomely, dismissed him with a note, purporting that he was well, and that he designed to set out immediately for *De Stainville Castle*. *Philip* was transported with joy, when *Alphonso* communicated to him the purport of the letter. "Now," said he, exultingly, "I shall see my dear old master again. How will he wonder to see me! Oh, what joy there will be in my dear mistress too! Sure, you will not deny me? Now you see, my dear, dear master, *Felix* has told you the truth; so you may trust him with the rewardship; for I do not care a fig about it."

Alphonſo was rather averſe to the meaſure, as he deemed it an encouragement to vice; but to ſatisfy his faithful ſervant, he with ſome diſſatisfaction conſented.

After leaving the neceſſary orders, they departed, and rode forward with the utmoſt diſpatch, hardly allowing themſelves time for the neceſſary reſt or refreſhment. About noon the following day they arrived at the convent. After ringing the bell, the ſuperior attended, and conducting them into the refectory, requeſted them to wait the coming of the noviciate. After a ſhort period of anxious ſuſpenſe, the door opened, and *Alphonſo* found himſelf encircled in the embraces of his mother. Years of ſorrow had deprived her cheeks of the roſes which gave the finiſh to beauty; grief and misfortune had brought on a premature old age; and her figure, though wan and emaciated, ſtill retained elegance and dignity. Her intereſting appearance deeply affected *Alphonſo*, while her cheeks glowed with rapture and delight at beholding ſuch a ſon. Mutual explanations enſued. *Alphonſo* informed her of the death of his uncle. "Unfortunate man!" ſaid the counteſs. "May he be pardoned for all his crimes! I ſincerely forgive him. But, oh, my huſband! *Alphonſo* would have ſet forward immediately for the chateau; but the counteſs reſtrained him. "Ah, no, my ſon! Do not, by your affectionate zeal, endanger your own life. Let us defer our departure till to-morrow; for think, my *Alphonſo*, after all my misfortunes, ſhould I loſe you, happineſs would no more viſit your poor mother." In compliance with her deſire, *Alphonſo* took his leave, and procured at an hotel accommodations for himſelf and *Philip*; and in the morning, having obtained a carriage for their conveyance, he returned to the convent.

His mother was prepared to receive him; and after taking an affectionate leave of the lady abbeſs, and rewarding her with a handſome preſent, took leave of the ſiſters, and was uſhered into the carriage by her ſon. *Philip* meeting them here, ſet forward to inform the baron of their approach.

As they came near the caſtle, the ſpirits of the counteſs ſunk; and when they ſtopt at the gates, her agitation was ſo great that ſhe fainted, and was conveyed by *Alphonſo* into the parlour. She ſoon revived; and on opening her eyes, beheld the affectionate *Julia* leaning over her with mingled emotions of ſurpriſe and concern. *Alphonſo* entered the room, accompanied by a gentleman, and the baron, who no ſooner beheld the counteſs than he ſunk lifeleſs into the arms of his ſon, which were extended to receive him. The counteſs ſprang to him, exclaiming, "My lord! my huſband! He opened his eyes; and fixing them on her, "My *Roſalia!*" ſaid he, "is it indeed you? Nature ſurely cannot ſupport this exceſs of joy.—My ſon!" to *Alphonſo*, taking a hand of each. "Oh, my parents, may this interview be a happy one. Receive the congratulations of your *Alphonſo*, and beſtow upon him your bleſſing."

He knelt down, and was embraced, by turns, by his delighted parents. Nor was *Philip* deficient in expreſſions of joy. His grateful heart overflowed with rapture, as he received the praiſes of the count and counteſs for his fidelity.

Tranquillity being reſtored, curioſity ſucceeded; and each being anxious to know what had befallen the other, the count thus began:—

"For ſome days after I had quitted the caſtle in the diſguiſe *Felix* had provided me with, I continued to wander as ſecretly as poſſible about the grounds, in hopes of gaining a tranſient glimpſe of my *Roſalie*. Diſtracted at the failure of my plan, I ſeveral times meditated openly bidding defiance to my inhuman brother; but again I was reſtrained by the tremendous oath I had taken, and which not the proſpect of inſtant annihilation could induce me to break. Deſpairing at length of again ſeeing my adored wife, and forced by the preſſing calls of nature to ſeek for ſuſtenance, I quitted the wood, and wandered, unknowing whither till, exhauſted with fatigue and grief, I ſunk, almoſt in my laſt agonies, upon the earth. Some peaſants paſſing, and perceiving my ſituation, humanely proffered their aſſiſtance. They conveyed me to their homely cottage, and nouriſhed me with the produce of their honeſt labour. Their kindneſs was but ill repaid; a dangerous fever ſeized me, and confined me, an expenſive burthen upon their hands. Alas! how often have I prayed for a termination of my wretched exiſtence! I recovered ſlowly; and with what trifling property I had in my pocket rewarded my charitable benefactors, who, gratified and aſtoniſhed at my liberality, followed me with their bleſſing. To divert the anguiſh of my mind, I undertook a pilgrimage to *Loretto*. My food by the way was ſome milk which I procured from the kind goatherds, and ſome coarſe bread with which they ſupplied me. The ſun was juſt ſinking beneath the horizon, when I one evening threw myſelf on the ground, and taking from my wallet a few crufts, began to make my ſcanty meal, which I ſoftened with my tears, and indulged myſelf in giving full vent to my grief. The ſtillneſs of the ſcene around me contributed to tranquillize my mind more than it had admitted of for ſome time paſt. I envied the lot of the apparently happy labourers; and comparing their ſtate with mine, how agoniſing was the compariſon. My thoughts were, however, ſoon diverted from my own ſorrows, by the ruſtling of leaves behind me, and a voice exclaiming, 'help, help!' I caſt my eyes around, but could not perceive any thing. Again the ſame words were more diſtinctly repeated, though in a more feeble voice. I ſtarted from my ſeat, ſought the ſpot from whence the ſound proceeded, and diſcovered lying in a deep valley, ſome paces diſtant, a venerable figure. I endeavoured to raiſe him, but my efforts evidently gave him pain. I was at laſt ſucceſsful, and I aſſiſted him to the ſpot from which I had riſen. The hermit (for ſuch I conjectured him to be) renewed his acknowledge-

ments as soon as the power of articulation was restored. and entreated I would assist him to his cave, to which he showed the way. I complied, and was sorry to find that his attempt to walk increased the sprain which he had given his ankle. 'Alas!' said he, as we proceeded, 'what poor weak creatures we are. But for your fortunate arrival, I should in all probability have expired.' I felt happy in his society; the benignity of his countenance, and piety of his demeanor, insensibly interested me, and won me from my sorrows. In short, we agreed to share our fates together; and I, with no small satisfaction, took up my abode with the venerable *Austin*. We each, in turn, went to the neighbouring village, and procured from its generous inhabitants the means of subsistence. I continued, in his society, to drag on some months of comparative tranquillity, until my happiness was terminated by the death of my aged companion, who was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired in our cell. The sight of his cold remains, and the dreariness of the solitude, which I was nevertheless averse to quit, preyed upon my mind, and brought on an intermitting delirium, which seemed daily to increase. All the satisfaction I enjoyed was in holding conversation with my departed (as I supposed) wife, and assuring her of the haste I was making to join her. In one of these paroxysms I was intruded upon by the worthy baron, to whom I owe all my present felicity—a felicity which amply repays all my past sufferings."

Thus ended the count a recital which, from the interest his auditors took in his fate, could not but greatly affect their sensibility. Unwilling to give further scope to gloomy retrospections, the relation of the countess's adventures was deferred till another opportunity; and the remainder of that evening was employed in arranging their future plans, among which the union of *Alphonso* and *Adela* was an affair of no small importance. The count and countess did not for a moment withhold their consent; and the baron with joy again renewed his, since every obstacle that had hitherto impeded it was happily removed. After an evening past in the truest domestic felicity, they each retired to their respective apartments, to enjoy a repose undisturbed by care. They met the next morning cheerful and happy; and, at their united request, the countess commenced her recital:—

"I am confident," said she, addressing the count, "I need not attempt to describe the emotions I experienced on receiving the account of your death, which our dear *Alphonso* has already explained. By your own feelings, you may judge of mine. The purpose of *Fernando* was, however, defeated; for the idea of your being no more, served to strengthen rather than abate my aversion to him. I spurned his proposals of an honourable alliance; and, with horror and detestation in my looks, accused him of your murder, and demanded justice. He turned pale; his lips quivered. 'Tis well, madam,' exclaimed he;

'you may, perhaps, repent this conduct. I now leave to your choice; either accept my hand, my heart, and fortune, or a prison for life.' I smiled contemptuously, and hesitated not to prefer the latter. His fury was indescribable, and he took special care to embitter my choice with the most poignant anguish. My infant was torn from my arms, and I left in total ignorance of his fate. Day after day I was visited by my inhuman jailer, and my child offered as the reward of my compliance with his wishes. What a trial! I have since wondered how my reason held under such complicated misery. But for the kind attention of my faithful *Junette*, I should inevitably have sunk under the accumulation of distress which I endured. The wretch, fearful that even her soothing might contribute to strengthen my resolution against him, caused her to be forced from me, and confined in a separate apartment. He regularly brought me my allotted portion of food, and continued to persecute me with his abhorred proposals. Driven to desperation, I should certainly have put a period to my miserable existence, had the means been in my power. I was reserved for a better fate. I had thrown myself one day upon my knees, imploring heaven to relieve me, when I was roused from my devotion by a noise at the further end of the room; and before I could distinguish the spot from whence it proceeded, beheld *Junette* at my side. She entreated me not to be alarmed; and pointing to an aperture in the wainscot, caused by a sliding pannel through which she had entered, entreated me to change dresses with her. Ignorant of her intentions, I acquiesced; after which she desired me to secure whatever I had left of value, and follow her in silence. All I had was a few jewels then in my pocket, and my mother's picture. I immediately followed her through the pannel, and proceeded along a dark narrow passage, almost breathless with agitation. She suddenly stopped; and stooping to the ground, entreated me to assist her in raising a trap-door, by means of a ring fastened to it. We succeeded, and descended a winding flight of stone steps, so much impaired by time as to render them almost impassable. I trembled violently, and followed her with the greatest difficulty. She entreated me to exert all my resolution, by which means alone I could possibly effect my escape. We reached the bottom, and I found myself in a large vaulted chamber, the damp of which was so excessive, that water dripped from the roof in many places, and the noisome air of the place almost overcame me. I entreated *Junette* to stop a little; and seated myself, almost incapable of proceeding, on a broken fragment of stone. 'For heaven's sake, *Junette*,' exclaimed I, 'when did you discover this subterraneous passage?'—'I will acquaint you, madam,' said she, seating herself by my side, 'as we are now in a place of safety for the present. You may perhaps recollect that it was from count *Fernando*'s recommendation that you first took me into your service; but I believe you are ignorant how unworthy I was of

your kindness. You seem surprised, madam. I have no longer any concealments from you. All I can say in my vindication is, that I have ever had the most sincere attachment to you. I early fell a victim to the seducing arts of *Fernando*. In consequence of my imprudence I was renounced by my poor mother, who fell a sacrifice to her daughter's crime. Deluded by a promise of marriage, I sought my betrayer, informed him of my situation, and entreated him to procure me some place of security. He no more deceived me with false promises; but told me, that if I could obtain any place during my approaching illness, I should then be received as an attendant upon his sister-in-law, whom he represented as a worthy and amiable lady. Indeed, madam, I little knew his designs upon you at that time. But I fear I tire your patience. My sister received me, where I staid the necessary time. My child died, and I was received by you, as *Fernando* had planned. How faithfully I have served you, I am now about to prove. He took me from you, as you know, and confined me in a small apartment adjoining his own, the door of which was concealed by a portrait of himself; and he did not think I knew of any other communication. Fortunately, I was acquainted with the passage which, without stairs, goes upon a gradual ascent to the apartment where you were confined; the entrance to it was made of black crape, and fixed so artificially as to appear nothing more than the back of the chimney."

Alphonso here explained this to be the mysterious passage which he had found in his search with *Philip*, and which had hitherto so much perplexed him. The countess then proceeded:—

"Through this passage,' continued *Junette*, 'I groped upon my hands and knees, at a time when I knew his daily visit to me would not take place for some time. I had proceeded a considerable way, when my hand struck against the large ring which secures the trap-door. I pulled with all my strength; my efforts were attended with success, and I discovered this spot. Farther on is a burial place, the iron gate of which if with my assistance you can climb, you may make your escape into the wood without being discovered. My dress will effectually disguise you; and if you keep the path to the right, it will lead you to the cottage where my sister dwells; and she will put you in a method to discover an asylum.' I demanded why she would not accompany me. Tears filled her eyes. 'No, madam,' she replied, 'you will be much better able to escape alone; beside which, I hope, by staying, to awaken remorse in count *Fernando*, and perhaps influence him to do me justice. If not, I have no wish but to die by his hands.' All my remonstrances against this strange resolution were ineffectual; she was determined to return. Poor girl! I sincerely lament her untimely fate. She conducted me to the gate in the wood, which with some difficulty I climbed. I embraced her af-

tionately, and we parted for ever. I purſued the path ſhe had pointed out, and fled with all the ſwiftneſs in my power, looking back every moment in fear of a purſuit. I reached the cottage about ſun-ſet; all was profoundly ſtill; the doors and windows were old, and the moſs growing on the threſhold too fatally indicated that it was uninhabited. I puſhed the door with my feeble hands; it opened, and the bare walls ſhowed the extent of my misfortunes. I flung myſelf, overcome with fatigue and diſappointment, upon the floor, and in that deplorable ſtate would have welcomed death as a friend. I had, according to my own calculation, already travelled ſix miles, and was incapable of proceeding further, even to ſeek a ſhelter for the night. In the morning I again commenced my ſolitary way, unknowing whither; nor could the urgency of my ſituation overcome my dread of purſuit. Every footſtep or carriage I heard approaching, I hurried out of the way, heeding neither hedges nor ditches as obſtacles. How I ſupported the fatigue, is incredible; it proves what the human frame is capable of enduring when excited by neceſſity. I was on the point of expiring, when I reached the cave of the venerable father already deſcribed, and where our good *Philip* firſt gained intelligence of me. His kindneſs preſerved my life. When purſuing his directions I reached the convent of St. *Agnes*, I eaſily procured admiſſion. My rank and misfortunes won the heart of the amiable mother, and ſhe treated me with the tendereſt care. My hopes, though vague, of again ſeeing my ſon, induced me for a long time to reſiſt her earneſt entreaties to become one of the ſiſterhood; till, overcome by her perſuaſions, I at length conſented; fortunately, I had ſo long withſtood her ſolicitations. I muſt not, however, omit to ſay, that the loſs of my mother's portrait was conſidered by me as the greateſt of misfortunes; it has, nevertheleſs, ultimately tended to reſtore me to this dear circle."

The counteſs ceaſed, and received the congratulations of the party, who were mutually delighted at the *eclairciſſement*. They all joined in lamenting the fate of the unfortunate *Junette*; and *Philip*, who had been an old pretender to her favour, was ſo much concerned, that he vowed never again to think any more of matrimony.

The next object of their care was the plans for their future eſtabliſhment. *Alphonſo* and *Julia* were publicly betrothed to each other, and it was agreed, that the whole party ſhould return to *De Courville Caſtle*, for the purpoſe of ſolemnizing their nuptials. This plan was carried into execution. The happy and amiable pair were united, and received the full reward of their filial piety in the approbation and pleaſure of their parents. The count and counteſs *De Courville* purchaſed an elegant chateau, near the caſtle; which, by its vicinity, proved a deſirable reſidence for the new married pair. Thither they retired, after a month ſpent in the moſt ſplendid feſtivity, and

companied by the old baron; peaceful profpects were again reftored to the poor tenantry of the count, who had been fo long neglected; the rents were collected, and the grounds cultivated; and, in the happineſs of his dependants, the count beheld the reward of his attention. *Felix* was pardoned and diſcharged, not without receiving the means of providing himſelf with a comfortable ſubſiſtence from his maſter, who was unwilling, by leaving him totally deſtitute, to impel him to the commiſſion of greater crimes.

The baron did not long ſurvive the marriage of his daughter. At his death he bequeathed one-third of his eſtate to *Julia*; the remainder, with his title, to *Alphonſo* and his male iſſue for ever. The acquiſition of fortune or title was not in their eyes a compenſation for the loſs of ſuch an indulgent parent, and they regretted his death with unfeigned ſorrow.

Philip, become reſpectable from his recent ſervices and advanced age, was rewarded by *Alphonſo* with a handſome independence, yet choſe to continue with his maſter and miſtreſs (which he did) till his death.

The count and counteſs continued happy ſpectators of their children's felicity, and had the delight of beholding an amiable offſpring riſing around them, and reflecting their virtues. Taught by experience, the firſt leſſon they inſtilled into their youthful minds was to ſubdue their paſſions, as the moſt eſſential means of obtaining happineſs and ſelf-approbation. With joy they perceived their inſtructions were not ineffectual; and, as their minds and perſons expanded, their principles of piety and virtue grew more powerful.

When the count and counteſs *de Courville*, ſtricken with years, ſunk peaceful into their graves, they had the ſatisfaction to leave behind them children ſuch as the fondeſt parents could deſire—a family united among themſelves by the ſtrongeſt ties of duty and affection. Though education in a great meaſure ſtamps the man, virtue is within the reach of all; and although the path may be rugged, the reward is ſure.

THE

ENGLISH EARL;

or the Hiſtory of

ROBERT FITZWALTER.

IN the beginning of the twelfth century lived *Robert Fitzwalter*, renowned for his ſkill in arms and unbounded liberality, at a rich and hereditary eſtate in the north of *England*; where his wife having died in childbed, he dedicated the remainder of his days to the education of his children, which were two ſons, and a daughter, the innocent cauſe of her mother's death.

Robert (for that was the name of the elder brother) had attained his twentieth year, *Edwin* his eighteenth, and the blooming *Amanda* her fixteenth, at the period when this hiſtory commences: at which moment the diſpoſitions of the young *Fitzwalters* began to appear in the form they were to aſſume when arrived at maturity. That of *Robert*'s was a perfect emblem of his father's, an union of loyalty, honour, and benevolence. *Edwin*'s, on the contrary, was formed for perfidy. Devoid of courage, he was at once ambitious, cruel, and aſpiring; though at the ſame time that he tyrannized over his vaſſals, he wore, in the preſence of his father, the maſk of humility and innocence; while *Amanda*, poſſeſt of charms that would have graced the *Britiſh* throne, united to a virtuous diſpoſition a kind and benevolent behaviour toward her inferiors.

A conſiderable time now elapſed without any particular event occurring worthy of remark; during which period they led a life of uninterrupted happineſs; but, alas! the peaceful laurel was now baniſhed from the *Britiſh* ſhore; and *Fitzwalter* having received a ſummons to attend his royal maſter, had but juſt time to pack up what neceſſaries he wanted; which done, he left his children in the care of a truſty ſervant, *Gregory*; and taking a haſty leave, mounted his horſe, and ſet off, followed by a few attendants, to the *Britiſh* court.

The moments now paſſed on heavily at the caſtle, at leaſt with *Robert* and the fair *Amanda*, to whom the abſence of the earl their father ſeemed an endleſs ſource of affliction; when one evening *Robert* having rode out, as it was his uſual cuſtom, gave way to reflexion; and ruminating on the uncertainty of his father's fate, wandered to a conſiderable diſtance from the caſtle; and at length, on recovering from his reverie, found himſelf in the midſt of a gloomy foreſt, with no other food than the berries, or (as the night was faſt approaching) any other bed than the graſs whereon he might repoſe his weary limbs, being extremely tired. He, however, alighted from his horſe, and faſtening it to a tree, he threw himſelf on the graſs, where he ſlept quietly till after day-break, when he was awaked by the loud diſcourſe of ſome people near him. Alarmed at this circumſtance, he inſtantly aroſe, and looked cautiouſly among the trees; but, to his infinite ſurpriſe, he could diſcover no one, although he ſtill heard the voices of men as diſputing. At length, upon liſtening more attentively, he heard one of them exclaim, "She belongs to me. I firſt diſcovered her, and in ſpite of all the furies I will have her."

The idea of a lady being in danger inſtantly rouſed the courage which had hitherto lain dormant in the breaſt of *Robert*, who immediately mounting his horſe, rode toward the place from whence the ſound proceeded; when, on turning a clump of trees, he diſcovered two armed men endeavouring to force a lady of incomparable beauty. Enraged at their perfidy, he rode up to them, and in a tone of fury demanded them to

desist. The ruffians, startled at this unexpected encounter, quitted their hold, but no sooner perceived the youthful countenance of their opponent, than they laughed at his temerity, and seizing their trembling captive, were about to renew their infernal purpose; which was no sooner perceived by *Robert*, than he flew on them with the fury of a lion, and at one blow lay the ruffian who stood nearest to him at his feet; which his companion no sooner saw, than he fell on his knees, and implored his mercy, which *Robert* instantly granted, on condition of his making an ample confession of their intentions against the lady, which the ruffian did in the following words:—

"'Tis now three years since the decease of count *Ferdinand*, in whose service *Hugo* (the ruffian whom you have just slain) and myself have lived ever since the days of our childhood. He left his only son *Edward* sole heir to the castle, and the vast possessions belonging to it, which are situated on the borders of this forest. Used to a life of idleness and debauchery, we had long viewed the charms of the lady *Elfrida* his sister with an ardent desire of possessing them; and conceiving this event propitious to our wishes, we waited with impatience for a favourable opportunity to effect our purpose, which did not take place till this morning, when, under the pretence of attending her in her morning ride, we decoyed her into this forest, where but for your providential interposition, she had fell a victim to our brutal wishes."

Pleased with the sincerity and remorse which the surviving ruffian displayed in the course of his narration, *Robert* not only pardoned, but took him home to the castle, and shortly after placed him in his service. His next care was to unbind the lady, who in the most courteous manner returned him thanks for her delivery; when having placed her on his horse behind him, he conveyed her to the castle of her brother, where, as count *Edward* was gone in search of her, although *Elfrida* would have had him wait his return, *Robert* partook of a slight repast; and then taking leave, set out on his journey homeward, followed by his new attendant.

During his absence from the castle, every one was anxious for his life, excepting *Edwin*, who, envious of his brother's virtue, was never more delighted than when he thought him exposed to danger. Nevertheless, he was among the foremost to welcome his return to the castle; while the unsuspecting *Robert* seemed to derive new pleasure from this fresh instance of his brother's affection, who no sooner heard the adventure of the day related, than he broke out into the most extravagant encomiums of his brother's valour; and in the evening, to crown his hypocrisy, retired to his chamber, offering up a thousand prayers for the preservation of his beloved life.

He no sooner reached his apartment, than he gave way to the natural malignity of his temper, and began to reflect on the most probable means of destroying the life of one whom he

looked on as a ſtumbling block in his way. 'Twas ſome time before he could hit on any thing that he might depend on, 'till reflecting on the late adventure, the new attendant of *Robert* ſtruck him as a proper inſtrument for his purpoſe. With this idea he retired to reſt; and ſeizing the firſt opportunity of converſing with *Jaques* (for that was the name of the ruffian) alone the next morning, he, by offering him a large reward, and promiſing him his protection, brought the half-repentant villain to his purpoſe. This point was no ſooner ſettled, than they proceeded to conſult on the likelieſt means of putting their plan into execution; when it was agreed that they ſhould meet in the gallery-chamber about midnight, and from thence enter the chamber of *Robert*, and put a final period to his exiſtence; after which they ſeparated, promiſing to meet again in the evening. The appointed hour at length arrived, and the perfidious *Edwin* no ſooner found the caſtle buried in ſilence, than he repaired to the gallery-chamber, where he found his baſe aſſociate waiting his arrival. They immediately drew their daggers, and ſtealing along with cautious ſteps, at length reached the chamber-door of *Robert*—'twas faſt. "Vengeance and fury!" exclaimed *Edwin* in a rage, "our plan is foiled, and the puny boy muſt ſtill live to croſs the path of all my earthly joys." So ſaying, he left the ſpot, followed by *Jaques*, as he durſt not force the door, for fear of awaking his brother, whoſe valorous arm he well knew he was not able to withſtand.

Several days now paſſed over in perfect tranquillity; during which period *Edwin* and his perfidious colleague had frequent meetings; and at length *Edwin* invited his brother to ſup with him; when after ſupper, *Jaques*, who was the only ſervant that attended them, having ſet three goblets of wine upon the table, he was invited by *Edwin* to ſit; which *Robert* readily agreeing to, *Edwin* took a goblet in his hand, and drank the ſpeedy return of the earl their father, in which he was readily accompanied by *Robert*. *Jaques* followed the example, and emptied his goblet at a draught, but had not done ſo long before he grew pale, and uttering a groan, fell from his chair in the agonies of death; which was no ſooner perceived by *Edwin*, than he exclaimed, "the die is caſt, and this place muſt no longer afford me an aſylum." So ſaying, he ruſhed from the chamber, and leaving the caſtle unwandered no one knew whither. In the mean time *Robert* leaned over the dying ruffian with a mixture of pity and ſurpriſe in his countenance, the latter of which was conſiderably augmented when *Jaques*, in a faint voice, entreated him to be on his guard, adding that the poiſon which he had drank in miſtake was intended by his brother *Edwin* for him; at which words he gave a groan, and expired. *Robert* then left the room; and ordering ſome of the ſervants to take care of the body, retired to his apartment, to give vent to the grief which this diſcovery of his brother's perfidy had occaſioned.

A conſiderable time now elapſed without *Robert* being able

to gain the ſmalleſt intelligence of the fugitive *Edwin*, although he uſed every means in his power to diſcover his retreat; toward the latter end of which period, the earl, who, as we before mentioned, had been abſent at the wars, having arrived from the Continent, landed on his native ſhore, and immediately ſet out for the caſtle of his anceſtors; when, on his entering a gloomy foreſt within a few miles thereof, he was ſuddenly attacked by a party of robbers, the foremoſt of whom he, with one blow of his battle-axe, laid dead at his feet; but at length, being overpowered by numbers, he was forced to ſubmit; when having bound him hand and foot, they laid him acroſs his horſe, and then conducted him, through the moſt intricate parts of the foreſt, until they arrived at the mouth of a ſpacious cave, when their captain ordered him to be taken from his horſe, and carried into the cave. The entrance to it was dark, and ſo extremely narrow, that only two men could go in a-breaſt. The robbers alighted, and taking him from his horſe, led him through a long gloomy paſſage, when they at length entered a ſpacious cavern illuminated with a vaſt quantity of lamps, where he was loaded with chains, and confined in a ſmall cavity of the rock; while the banditti, after having divided their booty, gave way to mirth and revelry, making the hollow cave reſound with their licentious cries, till their brain at length becoming diſtracted through intoxication, the ſcene was changed to one of riot and confuſion, nor ended till, rendered totally inſenſible, they ſunk into the arms of ſleep, leaving the ill-fated earl at leiſure to reflect on the horridneſs of his ſituation.

The ſun had been riſen ſome time before any of the banditti were ſtirring; when at length one of the robbers entered the cell of the captive earl, bearing a ſmall baſket of proviſion and a pitcher of water, followed by his captain. The bearer of the one who bore the proviſion was up, while that of the other was down, as indeed he ſcarcely ever had it otherwiſe, ſeeming always apprehenſive of a diſcovery. The robber had no ſooner ſet down his load than, upon a ſignal from his captain, he retired: when the captain, addreſſing himſelf to his priſoner, promiſed him his liberty, on condition of his becoming one of their ſociety; and on the other hand perpetual bondage, in caſe of a refuſal. The earl heard him to the end with ſilent indignation; and upon being preſſed for his anſwer, replied, with undaunted firmneſs, that he would ſooner bare his boſom to their ſabres than ſubmit to ſo infamous a propoſal. Enraged at his fortitude, the captain half drew his ſword, with a deſign of diſpatching his captive, 'till recollecting that ſeverity, and a ſuſpenſion of his daily food, might induce him in time to yield to his propoſal, he put up his ſabre; and after bidding him conſider of the terms he had offered, quitted the cell, venting a thouſand curſes on him for his obſtinacy.

The earl was no ſooner alone than, inſtead of giving way to

that affliction which his preſent hopeleſs ſituation might have been ſuppoſed to occaſion, began to think on the moſt probable means of making his eſcape; but though he formed many ſchemes, yet they all ſtill proved abortive, for want of ſome one beſide himſelf to aſſiſt in the execution of them; but fortune, however, at length favoured him, at a time when he leaſt expected it, and preſented a mode for his eſcape which he had never before thought of. One of the robbers, more humane than the reſt of his comrades, had for ſome time, notwithſtanding the orders of his captain, regularly viſited the captive earl at midnight, bringing with him on thoſe occaſions an ample ſupply of ſuch neceſſaries as he thought the earl might ſtand in need of. To this man then the earl at length ventured to expreſs a deſire of once more enjoying that liberty which he was then deprived of. The robber ſighed; while a tear of pity ran down his hollow viſage; and muttering ſomething againſt the cruelty of his captain, was about to leave the cell, when the earl called him back, and at length, on promiſing him a large reward, ſucceeded in gaining him over to his purpoſe. They then ſeparated till the next evening, when, meeting at the uſual hour of midnight, they, by their joint exertions, contrived to work a paſſage through a ſmall hole in the cell, which they had now enlarged ſufficiently to admit one perſon to paſs through at a time; when, taking advantage of the banditti being engaged in their nocturnal revels, they ſtole forth unperceived; and, after ſeveral hours ſmart walking, arrived at the extremity of the foreſt; when perceiving a light at ſome ſmall diſtance before them, they directed their ſteps toward it, and at length found themſelves at the foot of a draw-bridge belonging to an ancient caſtle, which, to their no little ſurpriſe, was ſtill down. They immediately croſſed the moat; and on their arrival at the caſtle-gate, the earl gave three loud knocks, when it was immediately opened by the porter, who demanded his buſineſs; to which queſtion the earl courteouſly replied, by telling him that he was returned from the wars, and having loſt his way, was nearly worn out with fatigue; therefore humbly ſolicited a night's lodging under the roof of his noble maſter. The porter retired, to deliver the meſſage to his lord; and returning in a few moments after, conducted them into his preſence, who, after a few queſtions concerning the general iſſue of the war, ordered him to be conducted to his chamber, and his attendant to be taken care of.

Refreſhed with the peaceful ſlumber he had enjoyed, the earl roſe betimes the next morning, and no ſooner heard that count *Edward* was come down (for the caſtle wherein he then was belonged to the noble brother of *Elfrida*), than he repaired to his ſtudy; and, after returning him his thanks for the aſylum he had afforded him, took his leave, and with his attendant mounting a couple of horſes, which the count had cauſed to be provided for them, ſet out for *Alnwick Caſtle*, elated with the

pleasing idea of once more beholding the youthful scions of his house. As their horses were good, they reached the desired haven about noon, where the earl's arrival spread a general joy over the faces of all the inhabitants of the castle, while *Robert* and *Amanda* rushed into his arms, and almost smothered him with their caresses. The first emotions of joy were barely subsided, when the earl missing *Edwin*, demanded the reason of his absence, and was no sooner made acquainted with the cause thereof (although *Robert* did it with the greatest precaution), than he fainted away, and was conveyed in a state of insensibility to his chamber, where, upon his coming to his senses, he was attacked by a violent fever, which rendered it impossible for him to quit the room for several weeks. At length time, and the tender assiduity of his daughter the fair *Amanda*, removing in some measure the affliction he laboured under, he was enabled once more to rejoin his two remaining children in the breakfast parlour.

The earl was no sooner recovered, than it was agreed that *Robert* should set out in quest of his ill-fated brother; and as a further inducement toward the latter discovering himself, it was also settled that *Robert* should wear on that occasion the armour of *Jaques*, as they did not doubt but *Edwin* would, on seeing him so disguised, come from his concealment of his own accord, concluding it was no other than *Jaques* himself, and that he had by some means discharged the poison he had swallowed. The next morning being appointed for the journey, *Robert* mounted his courser, and set out in quest of *Edwin*. He travelled the best part of the day without meeting with any adventure worthy of remarking. At length he found himself on a wild common, without the least vestige of a human being, or any of their dwellings, the earth and sky being the only objects that met his attention wheresoever he turned his eyes. His appetite now began to grow keen; and, although possessed of money, he had no means of satisfying the cravings of nature; but what added still more to his misfortune was, that the night advancing very fast, he began to be apprehensive that he must take up his lodging among the furze that grew thereabout in great abundance. However, as his fortitude ever remained unshaken amid the greatest danger, so it inspired him with fresh vigour on this occasion. Offering a prayer to heaven for protection, he clapped spurs to his horse, and directing his course at random across the common, arrived about twilight at a small village which stood on the skirts thereof. He rode for some time before he discovered a convenient place where he might procure that refreshment he stood so much in need of. At length he perceived a small cottage, the door of which was standing open. He immediately alighted, and fastening his horse to the rails, walked into it, where he found a decent middle-aged woman sitting by a good turf fire kindled on the hearth, who started at his sudden appearance, but was no

ſooner made acquainted with the cauſe of his intruſion, than ſhe, with that true ſpirit of hoſpitality which is ever to be found among the *Britiſh* peaſantry, told him he was welcome to ſuch ſcanty fare and lodging as her humble roof afforded. *Robert* bowed his thanks, and ſeated himſelf by the fire.

He had not been long thus comfortably ſituated before the huſband entered with a large baſket of proviſions, who no ſooner diſcovered a ſtranger ſitting by the fire, than he exclaimed, "Hey day! who have we got here?"—"A poor traveller," replied *Jeanette* (for that was the name of the female peaſant), who having loſt his way, is almoſt periſhed with cold and hunger."—"Then, if that is the caſe, wife," replied *Andrew*, "I think the contents of my baſket will ſoon ſettle the buſineſs, when aided by a can or two of our beſt ale mulled." He then emptied the contents on the table, ſaying, "ſee, *Jeanette*, what the hoſpitality of the count has afforded us." Finding the peaſants begin to grow warm in their encomiums on their benefactor, *Robert* ventured to aſk them, in a careleſs manner, his name, and what family he was deſcended from; upon which *Andrew* gave him the deſired information in the following words:—

"We were both ſervants to count *Ferdinand*, in which ſituation we led a life of uninterrupted happineſs, 'till, worn out with age and infirmity, our good old maſter died, but not without leaving a ſmall annuity to ſuch of his ſervants as were either grown old, or had married in his ſervice. We were among the latter number; and no ſooner ſaw our benefactor depoſited in the family vault, than we retired, with the permiſſion of our young lord *Edward*, who ſucceeded his father in his title and eſtates, to this cottage, where we have lived ever ſince, while our ſituation is rendered ſtill more comfortable through the hoſpitality of the count, who not only furniſhes us with the ſurplus of his table, but frequently throws in a ſmall ſum of money into the bargain."

The peaſant then proceeded to inform his gueſt of the attempt on lady *Elfrida*, together with her being reſcued by a ſtrange knight, who brought her back to the caſtle in triumph. *Robert* ſmiled at the encomiums with which this latter part of the ſtory was interlarded by *Andrew*, who little thought he was addreſſing himſelf to the identical knight he had been ſpeaking of; and therefore interpreting the ſmile to be one of approbation, he proceeded with his narration, as follows:—

"Several months now elapſed without any thing happening to diſturb the tranquillity of the inhabitants of the caſtle, when one morning the lady *Elfrida* was diſcovered to be miſſing. Diſtracted at this intelligence, the count ſent out his ſervants in all directions; but, alas! all their endeavours proved uſeleſs, and, in ſpite of the moſt diligent inquiry, they have not been able to obtain the ſmalleſt tidings of her ſince."

The cottager here ended his narrative; and as the night was

far advanced, they retired to their respective apartments, where *Robert* spent the hours in restless uncertainty, as to the fate of his brother and the absent lady. The day therefore had no sooner made its appearance in the east, than he left his chamber; and having taken leave of his host, and made him accept of a trifle for the trouble he had given him on the preceding night, he mounted his horse, and resumed his journey, which he continued 'till the evening, when coming to a vast forest, he resolved, as there was no habitation near, to spend the night under one of the most shady trees. With this view he alighted; and fastening his horse to a tree, seated himself on the ground; where, overcome with fatigue, he soon sunk into a profound slumber, from which he did not wake 'till the next morning, when, to his no small surprise, he found himself deprived of his sword, and chained down in a dark and gloomy cavern. 'Twas in vain that he endeavoured to account for so strange an event. The more he reflected, the more his ideas became confused; and he therefore resolved to leave the unravelling of it to time. In this situation he remained several days without seeing any person except the robber, who brought him his scanty allowance of bread and water; during which period he could not hit upon any certain method of making his escape, 'till the idea struck him, that the banditti were generally so covetous after money, that they would barter the lives of their dearest friends for the sake thereof; when he resolved to try the effects of bribery on his keeper. Accordingly, the next day, after some previous conversation, he broke his purpose to the robber; but, to his infinite astonishment, found the fellow proof against the bait; who with a stern air left the dungeon, telling him he had not yet learnt to betray his trust.

Chagrined and disappointed, *Robert* threw himself on his bed of straw, in an agony of despair; when he felt something hard under him among the litter. This awakened his curiosity; and he stretched out his hand, in order to discover what it was; when, to his infinite horror, it proved to be a dagger; and 'on its blade and dudgeon gouts of blood;' while the rust which was on it declared it to have lain there for many years. As soon as he recovered from his surprise, *Robert* instantly resolved to make use of it in freeing himself from the ignominious bondage he was held in. With this view he frequently struck it against the projecting parts of the rock; and having notched it sufficiently for his purpose, attempted to file off his chains; which at length, after a deal of labour, he happily effected. He had just freed himself from his disgraceful manacles, when perceiving two of the banditti approaching, he plunged the dagger in the breast of the foremost, who gave a groan, and expired; while the second fell on his knees, and implored his mercy; which *Robert* granted, after having made him swear on the sword which he had taken from the fallen robber to conduct him in safety from the abode of the banditti,

at the same time promising him a situation in his family for life. The robber then, as a token of his sincerity, surrendered up his sword; having done which, he immediately conducted *Robert* through several turnings, 'till they came to a flight of stone steps, descending which they passed on through a long passage, illumined here and there with the glimmering rays of a solitary lamp, 'till they at last found their progress impeded by a large door covered with black. At that moment a shriek from within was heard by *Robert*, who immediately with the fury of a famished lion (although the robber endeavoured to prevent him) rushed against the door. It flew into a thousand pieces, and presented to his view, in the person of the captain of the banditti, his long-lost brother *Edwin*, who was then in the action of forcing *Elfrida* to his wishes. The unexpected appearance of *Robert*, whom *Edwin* thought fast bound in an obscure dungeon, nearly petrified him with astonishment. Incapable of resistance, he suffered himself to be disarmed by his brother. He was then, together with the lady *Elfrida*, led forth by *Robert*, who, with the assistance of his new ally, brought them out of the cavern; and taking some of the horses belonging to the sleeping banditti, arrived in safety at an adjacent village, where he put up at an inn; and having ordered the lady *Elfrida* to be taken care of, he took his brother *Edwin* to another apartment; where, after many gentle remonstrances, he at length prevailed on him to give the following account of his transactions since the time of his sudden disappearance from the castle:—

"You recollect, no doubt," said *Edwin*, in a tone of seeming penitence, "the distractedness of my behaviour, when, on finding the fatal mistake my associate had committed, I left the chamber so abruptly; nor need I add, since I make no doubt but he informed you of it, 'twas my intention to poison you, had not providence so happily frustrated the wickedness of my design. Grown frantic at the disappointment, I wandered I knew not whither, and at length found myself in the midst of a gloomy forest, where I was immediately surrounded by a strong party of banditti, who took me prisoner; while I, regardless of my fate, suffered them to lead me to their cavern without making the least resistance; when after a few days captivity, their captain having been slain, they made me the offer of succeeding him; which, as it was consonant with the natural malignity of my temper, I readily accepted. In this situation, I treated such captives as chance threw in our way with the utmost severity, 'till at length, in the course of my rambles, I met with my father returning from the wars, whom I took (after a strong resistance) prisoner. 'Twas my intent to imprison him for life; but fate ordained it otherwise; for one of the robbers being drawn over to his interest, they took the opportunity, while the banditti were buried in sleep, to escape. 'Tis impossible to describe the rage with which my bosom was first in-

ſpired when I made the diſcovery; but it was ſoon abated when, on the enſuing evening, a party of my deſperados brought in the lady *Elfrida*, whom they had ſeized while ſhe (as was her uſual cuſtom) was taking her evening ride in the purlieus of the caſtle. I inſtantly became a captive to her charms; and having ordered my comrades to retire, without any further preamble, bade her prepare to gratify the deſires ſhe had inſpired me with. To this ſhe anſwered only with a look of indignation; and upon my proceeding to force her, repulſed me with ſcorn. Enraged at her firmneſs, I called two of the banditti, and ordered them to convey her to the black chamber, adding, that if ſhe ſtill remained inflexible, ſhe ſhould remain there for life, with no other nouriſhment than bread and water. From that time I acted as her gaoler, and regularly carried the ſcanty pittance to her dungeon, where ſhe ſtill continued to treat my offers with diſdain. Not long after, you were brought in by ſome of the banditti, who had ſurpriſed you while ſleeping in the foreſt. At firſt, owing to the armour you was diſguiſed in, I thought *Jaques* had by ſome means eſcaped the effects of the poiſon; but when, on raiſing the beaver, I diſcovered your well-known features, my boſom thrilled with ſavage delight, and I cauſed you, while yet ſleeping, to be conveyed to one of the dampeſt cells, and heavy loaded with irons; which done, I exulted when I reflected on the diſagreeable ſenſations it muſt occaſion, when you ſhould awake, and find yourſelf in ſo terrible a ſituation. Laſt night I had fixed for the full completion of my deſigns, which were the poſſeſſion of the object of my wiſhes, and the termination of your exiſtence, whom I looked on as an inſeparable bar to the ambitious views I had formed of attaining that rank and title which of right belongs to you alone. The reſult of laſt night's adventure you are fully acquainted with, and I have only to add, that whatever may be your decree, I am ready to ſubmit."

Here *Edwin* finiſhed his narration; when *Robert*, after promiſing his brother forgiveneſs, in caſe of his reforming, retired to reſt, leaving him in the care of a couple of ruſtics, whom he had hired for the purpoſe.

The next morning, after having taken a little refreſhment, *Robert* left the inn, together with the lady *Elfrida*, and his captive brother, attended by the robber and the two ruſtics, and reſumed their journey. After travelling a few miles, he was ſuddenly attacked by an armed knight. The conteſt was for ſome time maintained with equal fury on both ſides, 'till victory decided in favour of *Robert*, who at length threw his antagoniſt from his horſe, ſo much wounded as to be unable to riſe. *Robert* inſtantly alighted, and raiſed the ſtranger's beaver, in order to diſcover who it was that had ſo rudely aſſailed him, when *Elfrida* exclaimed, with a ſhriek of horror, "it is my brother!" and immediately fainted in the arms of the attendants. *Robert* then cauſed the wounded knight to be replaced on his horſe;

and as soon as the lady *Elfrida* recovered, the whole cavalcade moved on slowly to *Alnwick Castle*, whither, as it was but a few miles distant, they arrived soon after in perfect safety; when *Robert* having seen his guests conveyed to their respective chambers, inquired of *Amanda*, (whom he met coming to welcome his return) of his father's health during his absence; but, alas! that pattern of *English* hospitality and benevolence was no more. Grief for the perfidy of the fugitive *Edwin*, and the long absence of *Robert*, whom he concluded to have fallen a victim to his desire of recovering a long-lost brother, had put a period to an existence already weakened by a fit of illness. 'Twas some time before *Robert* could recover from the shock this sudden intelligence had given him. However, he no sooner regained his spirits, than he ordered *Amanda* to attend on *Elfrida*, while he sent for *Edwin*, to inform him of the fatal event.

Edwin entered the chamber of his brother in a state of sullen despondency; which *Robert* perceiving, broke the circumstance of the earl's death to him by degrees. *Edwin* changed colour, and was about to leave the place; which *Robert* perceiving, pulled him gently back by the sleeve. He sat down, and trembled, overwhelmed with confusion; when *Robert* addressed him as follows:—

"Though you have been ungrateful hitherto, yet I am resolved to bury the past in oblivion. You are still my brother; and although the death of our father without a will has left me sole heir to his vast possessions, yet, in hopes of your future amendment, I here give up the half of them in your behalf. Go, and sin no more."

These last words of *Robert* struck him to the heart. He attempted to speak, but his tongue refused its office, and he left the chamber, thunderstruck at the unexpected kindness of his brother.

Several days now passed without any thing occurring to disturb the tranquillity of *Alnwick Castle*, during which period the deceased *Fitzwalter*'s remains were deposited in the family vault, whither they were attended by *Robert*, *Amanda*, and *Edwin*; when the grief of the latter seemed to exceed, if possible, that of the afflicted *Robert* and his sister; and indeed the whole of his behaviour for some time after seemed to promise a total reformation. One evening the count, being sufficiently recovered from his wounds, took an airing on horseback with *Robert* in the neighbourhood of the castle; during which excursion, the count informed the latter, that he should not have attacked him so violently, had not the armour he wore led him to imagine 'twas *Jaques*, who, with another ruffian, had attempted before to carry off his sister, when they were so providentially prevented by a strange knight, who had seen her to the castle, and never was heard of after.

Robert heard him to the end in silence; and then, with modest confusion in his countenance, not only owned the share he had

in that adventure, but alſo the impreſſion which the lady *Elfrida* had made on his heart. This confidence was repaid by a ſimilar declaration on the part of the count, in favour of *Amanda*.

They then agreed to break their minds to the fair objects of their affection; in which ſtate of mind they were returning to the caſtle; when *Robert* found himſelf attacked by a knight in black armour, who raiſing his ponderous battle-axe, was about to aim a blow at his head, which, but for the timely interpoſition of *Edward* (who perceiving his purpoſe, drew his ſword, and ſheathed it in his body), would have cleft him in two. The unknown knight fell; and having placed him on one of their horſes, they conveyed him, in a ſtate of inſenſibility, to the caſtle; where, upon their arrival, they immediately ſtript him of his armour; when, to their infinite ſurpriſe and horror, the ſable knight proved to be—*Edwin*. They bound up his wounds, and having conveyed him to his bed, adminiſtered a cordial to him; when opening his eyes, in a faint voice he implored his brother's forgiveneſs, adding, that nothing but death could have prevented his endeavouring to poſſeſs a title, which he had determined on obtaining, even at the expence of his future happineſs; "but, 'twill not be," exclaimed the perfidious *Edwin*; "and I die convinced that providence ever ſhields the virtuous from the malicious deſigns of their enemies." So ſaying, he uttered a deep groan, and expired, leaving a dreadful example of that vengeance which ever hangs over the heads of thoſe who endeavour to attain their ambitious views by the murder of ſuch as ſtand between them and their wiſhes.

The next day, the remains of the miſguided *Edwin* were depoſited among thoſe of his anceſtors; and the time of mourning for the deceaſed earl was no ſooner expired, than the count and *Robert* (who had firſt gained the conſent of their fair miſtreſſes) were married to *Amanda* and *Elfrida*, with whom they led a life of uninterrupted happineſs; while their hoſpitality and benevolence gained them at once both the love and eſteem of all around them.

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